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Boko Haram: An African Insurgency

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: October 16, 2015

Abstract

Boko Haram emerged as an independent group in Nigeria in the early 2000s and has since begun an insurgency, primarily operating in the northeastern region of Nigeria and increasingly further south and across the country's borders. Researchers have conducted numerous studies analyzing the causes of the insurgency. However few have compared it to other insurgencies in Nigeria or Africa. This thesis analyzes the causes behind Boko Haram's operations by drawing on the main debates within the literature on causes of insurgency in Africa.

This analysis demonstrates how the academic literature on insurgency in Africa highlights important causes of Boko Haram's insurgency, but it also identifies gaps in the literature. One of the most important findings of the thesis is that religion can be a dominate cause of conflict. I argue that one of the main causes of Boko Haram's insurgency is the political competition over various issues between Nigerian Islamic organizations and political organizations. The most recent examples are the implementation of Sharia law across many of the states in northern Nigeria coupled with elite mobilization of youth groups affiliated with mosques. The role of religion as a cause of Boko Haram´s insurgency should not however be exaggerated as specific state weaknesses, especially a weak security apparatus, caused by democratization have also been one of the significant causes.

List of Abbreviations

Al-Shabaab	Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
Ansaru	Jama'atu Ansaril Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan
APC	All Progressive Congress
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP	Gross domestic product
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
JTF	Joint Task Force
LGA	Local government area
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MUJWA	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
PDP	All Progressive Congress (APC)
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
YIM	Yusufiya Islamic Movement

Map of Nigeria with Geopolitical Zones and States

Figure 1, Source: Michael O. Sodipo, "Mitigating Radicalism in Northern Nigeria", *African Security Brief,* 26 (2013):2.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Nigerian military shelled the compound of the Islamic group *Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jama'a wa-l-hijra* between the 26th and 31st of July 2009. The attack formed part of a large scale military effort to quell the group's uprising in the states of Borno, Bauchi, Yobe, Gombe, Kano, and Katsina (see figure 1, page IV). Clashes between the group and the military during these days left more than 800 dead, including Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jama'a wa-l-hijra's leader Mohammed Yusuf. He was captured by military forces and handed over to local police, who summarily executed him on the 30th of July. Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jama'a wa-l-hijra reemerged the following year under a new name: *Jama'at ahl al-Sunna li-l-Da'wa wa-l-jihad 'ala Minhaj al-Salaf*, but the media and the general public were quick to assign the name Boko Haram.[1] In September 2010, Boko Haram conducted a prison raid liberating at least a 100 of their members, and in the succeeding years the group has been responsible for thousands of deaths.[2,3] These attacks have primarily been located in Nigeria´s North East geopolitical zone, but in recent years the group has attacked targets further south and even extended beyond Nigeria's borders.[4]

Boko Haram attracts a wealth of academic attention. One area of agreement is that the fighting belongs to the category of insurgency. A widely accepted definition of insurgency is that it involves fighting between the government (and its agents) and organized non-government groups with various political goals; the fighting results in at least (on average) 100 annual and at least 1,000 casualties overall; and at least 100 deaths on both sides.[5] This definition of insurgency categorizes insurgency as a method of fighting or a military practice involving, "small, lightly armed bands practicing guerrilla warfare[6] from rural base areas."[7]

A significant amount of the academic literature focuses on the causes behind the insurgency but this is an area of disagreement. This thesis, too, asks the questions: *What are the main causes of the Boko Haram insurgency?* The answers to the research question are related to the academic literature on causes of insurgency in Africa and gives direction to further studies.

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[1] Roman Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria", *Africa Spectrum*, 47:2-3 (2012):137-155.
[2] Manuel Reinert & Lou Garçon, "Boko Haram: A chronology", in Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (ed), *Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, (African Studies Centre, 2014):237-245.
[3]Armed Conflict Location & Event, "Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence", *Conflict Trends,* 33(2015):1-13; Armed Conflict Location & Event, "Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence", *Conflict Trends,* 22 (2014):1-14; Armed Conflict Location & Event, "Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence", *Conflict Trends,* 10 (2013):1-10.
[4] M. Reinert & L. Garçon "Boko Haram: A chronology", (2014):237-245.
[5] James Fearon & David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", *American Political Science Review,* vol.97 (2003):75:1; this is furthermore consistent with the definitions of the Correlations of War (COW) Project and Michael Doyle & Nicholas Sambanis "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis", *American Political Science Review,* vol.94:4 (2000):779-801.
[6] Involving, for example, the use of surprise; hit-and-run attacks; high mobility (in attack and escape); etc.
[7] J. Fearon and D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War", (2003):75-90.

1.1. The Main Causes of the Boko Haram Insurgency Reflected in the Literature

The most common explanation for Boko Haram's insurgency is poor socio-economic conditions in the North as a consequence of bad governance. Successive Nigerian governments' failures led to high levels of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and disenfranchisement, which in turn caused the insurgency.[8] Some of these studies do involve a modest comparative element, identifying similarities between the 1980s' Maitatsine insurgency and the current insurgency, emphasizing the continuous existence of deeply rooted socioeconomic problems in the North East.[9] Others point out the failure of democracy introduced in 1999 to deliver significant socioeconomic progress across Nigeria, but in particular in the region where Boko Haram emerged.[10] These studies are useful but "the link between the rise of group violence and socioeconomic underdevelopment remains unclear and the debate unsettled."[11]

A second set of explanations focus on the religious aspect of the Boko Haram insurgency. These studies understand Boko Haram as a natural consequence of northern Nigeria's history of radical militant Islam dating back to Sheikh Uthman dan Fodio's *jihad* and the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate in the early 19th century. Most religious explanations understand the religious drivers behind the insurgency as mainly domestic and point to the intersectionality of politics and religion in Nigeria.[12] Politicians have used religious affiliations as a means to increase popularity and political power.[13] These explanations contextualizes Boko

[8] See Daniel Agbiboa, "No Retreat, No Surrender: Understanding The Religious Terrorism Of Boko Haram In Nigeria", *African Study Monographs*, 34:2 (2013):65–84; Femi Ajayi & Ngozi Nwogwugwu, "Boko Haram And The Crisis Of Governance",(2014); Paul Rogers, "Nigeria: The Generic Context Of Boko Haram Violence", *Monthly Global Security Briefing,* (2012):1-5; Soloman A. Usman, "Unemployment And Poverty As Sources And Consequence Of Insecurity In Nigeria: The Boko Haram Insurgency Revisited", *African Journal Of Political Science And International Relations*, 9:3 (2015):90-99; Abimbola Adesoji, "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria", *Africa Spectrum*, 45:2 (2010):95-108.

[9] See Iro Aghedo, "Old Wine in a New Bottle: Ideological and Operational Linkages Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram Revolts in Nigeria", *African Security*, 7:4 (2014):229-250; Zachary Elkaim, "Boko Haram: The Rise, Success, and Continued Efficacy of the Insurgency in Nigeria", *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) working paper,* 5 (2012):1-38.

[10] Mohammed Nuruddeen Suleiman & Mohammed Aminul Karim, "Cycle of Bad Governance and Corruption: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria", *SAGE Open* January-March, (2015):1-11.

[11] Daniel E. Agbigboa, "Peace at Daggers Drawn? Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37 (2014): 41–67.

[12] Roman Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Muslim Movement in Nigeria", *The Annual Review of Islam in Africa,* 12:1 (2015):15-22;
Abiodun Alao, "Islamic radicalisation and violent extremism in Nigeria", *Conflict, Security & Development*, 13:2 (2013):127-147; Daniel Agbiboa, "The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram versus the State". *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(3):52 (2013):1-18; Murray Last, "The Pattern of Dissent: Boko haram in Nigeria 2009", *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 10 (2009):7-11.

[13] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism", in Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos(ed), *Boko Haram*: *Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, (African Studies Centre,2014):135-157; Gbemisola Animasawun & Luqman Saka, "Causal analysis of radical Islamism in northern Nigeria's Fourth Republic", *African Security Review*, 22:4 (2013):216-231; Isaac Olawale Albert "An Alternative Explanation of Religious Fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria" (2014).

Haram within the corrupt behavioral patterns of Nigerian politicians, but have yet to explain why an insurgency developed and/or why Boko Haram did not remain a small fringe group. Some studies of the religious aspects of the insurgency illuminate the religious rationale but these studies fail to provide convincing accounts of where and how Boko Haram fits into regional religious dynamics. Some studies see Boko Haram connected to the notion of a Global Jihad, suggesting that the al-Qaeda network helped establish Boko Haram to join in the fight against the West.[14] The main issue with this explanation is the lack of Nigerian contextualization and minimal evidence, underlined by the lack of *fatwas* issued by other Islamic organizations expressing support for Boko Haram, and that Boko Haram does not issue fatwas themselves.[15]

The religious explanation holds some currency. Boko Haram was an established Islamic group around the compound of the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque in Maiduguri in the far northeastern corner of Nigeria. The geographical epicenter is significant for how to categorize Boko Haram, because the North of Nigeria is historically more connected to the Islamic world of North Africa, the Middle East and beyond, through the trans-Saharan trade than Africa south of the rain forest belt. Islam was therefore introduced around the 9th century. From then the religion developed and gained popularity, becoming the foundation for empires and caliphates throughout the northern region of the geographical entity now known as Nigeria.[16] Islam in Nigeria is extremely vibrant and the three major Islamic traditions, Shiite, Sunni and Sufi, co-exist and interact with Nigerian politics in one way or another. The Boko Haram insurgency, although homegrown, might well be comparable to insurgencies of the Islamic world: the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, the Islamic Group in Egypt, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and other groups in Chechnya, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kashmir, the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, Philippines, Syria, Pakistan, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.[17]

Today, most Islamic insurgencies are often ideologically lumped together under the broad label of radical Salafism.[18] But as Hegghammer points out "The notion of a global *Salafi* (or *takfiri* or *Jihadi-Salafi*)

[14] A. Alao, "Islamic radicalisation and violent extremism in Nigeria"(2013):127-147; Yonah Alexander, "Special Update Report Terrorism in North, West, & Central Africa: From 9/11 to the Arab Spring", *Special Update Report*,(2012); Herman J. Cohen, "Al Qaeda in Africa: The Creeping Menace to Sub-Sahara's 500 Million Muslims", *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy*, 35:2 (2013):63-69; Shannon Connel, "To Be or Not To Be: Is Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization?", *Global Security Studies*, 3:3 (2012):87-93; Alex Thurston, "Threat of Militancy in Nigeria", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 1 Sep. 2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/01/threat-of-militancy-in-nigeri> (Retrieved 7 May 2015).

[15] David Cook, *Boko Haram: A New Islamic State in Nigeria*, (Rice University: James A. Baker Iii Institute for Public Policy, 2014):7.

[16] S.J. Hogen & A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions*, (London: Oxford University Press, London, 1966).

[17] Mohammed M. Hafez, *Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World,* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

[18] See Quitan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29 (2006):207-239; Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism", in Roel Meiger (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009):244-266; Barry Rubin, "Islamic Radicalism in the Middle East: A Survey & Balance sheet", *Middle East Review of International*

movement, while appealing as a collective noun, is in fact very problematic, because the actors subsumed in this category do not share political preferences. Salafis around the world work for different political agendas and thus pull in different directions."[19] Understanding and examining the causes of Boko Haram's insurgency framed in ideological terms therefore seems to confuse the topic more so than illuminate significant factors.

Finally, a set of explanations focuses on the Sahel-belt and how the insurgency is a result of regional instability. In this explanation, the causality lies outside of Nigeria. Regional instability derives from porous borders and how easily funds, arms, drugs, and veterans of foreign wars can move between countries. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) owes its development to these same regional forces.[20] While the explanation points out relevant factors of Boko Haram's development, these studies tend to confuse cause and consequence; just as the fighting of al-Shabaab has spilled over into neighboring territories, so too has the fighting of Boko Haram spilled over into Chad, Cameroon and Niger.[21]

The different explanations are to some extent unsurprising. The approach of many scholars in explaining the causes of insurgency is to focus on the favorable practical conditions, especially the lack of resources to fight (crippling incumbents and favoring rebels); terrain that enables insurgents' survival; large cohorts of young male populations; and political instability.[22] Even when a society contains many causes for an insurgency, the actual insurgency depends on the practical conditions favoring the insurgency. And conditions favoring insurgency have no necessary connection to societal causes of insurgency. *Any* political agenda and/or ideology - anti-colonialism, *jihadism*, communism, anti-communism, religion, secularism, etc. - can engage in insurgency.

It is noticeable that despite the similarity in the research methods used to arrive at answers, the existing answers to the question about the main causes of the Boko Haram insurgency are different. The most common method in researching Boko Haram is the case study. There is an obvious lack of studies either comparing Boko Haram to Nigeria's other insurgencies such as the Movement for the Actualization of the

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Affairs, 2:2 (1998):17-24; Fawaz Gerges, T*he Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global,*(London: Cambridge University Press, 2005); S.K Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War*, (Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1992).

[19] Thomas Hegghammer,"Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism", (2009):264.

[20] Micha'el Tanchum, "Al-Qa'ida's West African Advance: Nigeria's Boko Haram, Mali's Touareg, and the Spread of Salafi Jihadism", *Israel Journal of foreign Affair,* 6:2 (2012):75-90; Frank Cilluffo, Joseph Clark, & Clinton Watts, "Pardon The Pivot, What About Africa? African lessons for avoiding myopic national security", *HSPI Issue Brief,* 17 (2012)*;* Ayodeji Anthony Aduloju, Abimbola Opanike & Lawrence O. Adenipekun, "Boko Haram Insurgency In North-Eastern Nigeria And Its Implications For Security And Stability In West African Sub-Region*", International Journal of Development and Conflict*, 4 (2014):102-107; James J.F. Forest, "Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria", *JSOU Report* 12:5 (2012).

[21] M. Reinert & L. Garçon "Boko Haram: A chronology", (2014):237-245.

[22] J. Fearon and D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War", (2003):75-90.

Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEMD) groups, or the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), or to other insurgencies in Africa.

This thesis seeks to address this gap in research by drawing on the broader scholarly literature, especially its major debates and comparative methods, about the causes of insurgency in Africa, including previous insurgencies in Nigeria. The study confines itself to the scholarship concerned with insurgencies in the independent states of sub-Saharan Africa.

1.2. Method and Evidence

This study is a theory testing case-study in the sense that it relates the main causes of Boko Haram's insurgency (the case) to the debates about the causes of insurgency in Africa (the theory). As such, the study is located within Lijphart's description of a theory-generating case study.[23] Greed, Grievance, Ethnicity and the State, explain the main causes of insurgency present in the academic literature, and each is used as analytical categories to explore the causes of Boko Haram' insurgency.

The intent is to contribute to general understandings of insurgency in Africa by indicating where the broader literature fails to explain what causes insurgency while identifying new dynamics for further studies. The thesis could also point towards a conceptualization of Islamic insurgencies in Africa, and potentially beyond.

Caution is exercised when it comes to reliable evidence about Boko Haram's actions. The massacres of Doro Gowon and Baga in early 2015 underline this difficulty. Reports mention casualties anywhere between 150 and 2,000.[24,25] Misreporting data is commonplace in reports about conflict. Whereas authorities have incentive to keep numbers low to illustrate the success of the counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy, sensationalist and popular media inflate numbers to increase sales. Actual numbers are often difficult to obtain or impossible to estimate.[26] It's not only casualties and the factuality of events that are often veiled in mystery. Only fragmented information is available on the organizational structure, recruits, sponsors, and whereabouts of the group, and good analysis is based on carefully picked pieces of information and scrutiny of unreliable sources. Some aspects of Boko Haram are however uncontested and relatively detailed

[23] Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method", *The American Political Science Review*, 65:3 (1971):682-693.
[24] Camillus Eboh & Tim Cocks, "Nigeria's military says 150 killed in Boko Haram clashes in Baga", *Reuters,* 12 Jan. 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/12/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0KL26J20150112> (retrieved 27 January 2015).
[25] Mausi Segun,"Dispatches: What Really Happened in Baga, Nigeria?", *Human Rights Watch*, 14 Jan. 2015, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/14/dispatches-what-really-happened-baga-nigeria> (retrieved 27 Jan. 2015).
[26] Ryan Cummings, "COMMENT: Assessing the Baga massacre death toll", *Africa Check,* 14 Jan. 2015, http://africacheck.org/2015/01/14/comment-assessing-the-baga-massacre-death-toll/ (retrieved 27 Jan. 2015).

information is available, especially pertaining to the group's actions, including the use of suicide bombings, kidnapping, and the use of shocking violence.

This study is focused on the causes of Boko Haram's insurgency and is therefore heavily reliant on secondary data, in the form of other studies and analyses. Newspaper articles and video clips are rarely used as they are difficult to verify. Instead the study relies on firsthand accounts provided by Human Right Watch, International Crisis Group and the reports from Amnesty International to describe specific events. Even when these reports are used, multiple sources are consulted to verify specific accounts, and unreliable sources are indicated when necessary. The second chapter on causes of insurgency in independent Africa draws on a large volume of studies and strives to include both quantitative and qualitative studies in the discussion. Caution is also exercised in the conclusions. The Boko Haram insurgency has yet to end: conclusions and suggestions are thus conditional.

1.3. Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 explores the main debates and arguments within the literature on causes of insurgency in independent Africa. Greed, Grievance, Ethnicity and the State, are the main debates and each are explored individually to illuminate where consensus has been reached, and to point out the more inconclusive aspects of the debate. Chapter 3 firstly provides a descriptive history of the group: its emergence, the build up to the crucial clashes with the Nigerian police and military in June of 2009, its reemergence a year later and a brief description of the group´s history since its reemergence. The chapter then applies each of the four debates mentioned above to explore how the case study contributes to the debates. As evident by Boko Haram´s emergence, rivalry between religious organizations in northern Nigeria has been a relatively large factor, but the debate on religion as a cause of insurgency in Africa is underdeveloped and was therefore left out of chapter 2. Religion is explored as cause of Boko Haram´s insurgency to point out novel dynamics for a debate on how religion can be understood as a cause of insurgency. Chapter 4 discusses these findings against the general debates on insurgency, and gives direction to new enquiries that can further the literature on insurgency in Africa.

Chapter 2: Causes of Insurgency in Africa

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the academic literature on causes of insurgency in Africa.

The literature can broadly be divided into four separate debates:

Greed-Resource is the first debate and refers to the notion that the likelihood of insurgency is best correlated with monetary gains associated with natural resource exploitation. Grievance is often introduced as oppositional to Greed-explanations but the two explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. It is safe to say that some level of grievance is necessary for a specific group to pick up arms and initiate the costly affair of insurgency. Ethnicity, in terms of individual identity and/or the pattern of differences in society, has been widely discussed as a cause of conflict in Africa, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and the Sudan. As insurgency per definition is an armed rebellion against the state, it leads to many State or Governance-explanations. Religion has featured in a significant amount of conflicts across the continent, yet has not received the same amount of attention as any of the other explanations. Some studies have focused on religion and insurgency, but this is usually in relation to traditional African religions and how they have legitimized behavior in conflict.[27] As a cause of insurgency, the religious debate is underdeveloped and therefore excluded from the chapter but is pursued in chapter 3's analysis of Boko Haram, in order to give direction for a debate on religion as a cause of insurgency in Africa.

In all the types of explanations, it is evident that what scholars try to explain – their dependent variable, in others words - will vary, for example 'civil war'; 'conflict'; 'violence'; and 'war'. For the purposes of this review, these conceptual differences will be disregarded, as long as the dependent variable involves political violence, defined broadly as "collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors- including competing political groups as well as incumbents- or it policies."[28]

[27] See for example; David Ian. *Guns & Rain: Guerrillas & Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (London : James Curry; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985); Tim Allen, & Koen Vlassenroot (eds.), *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, (London & New York: Zed Books, 2010).
[28] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971): 3-4.

2.1-Greed-Resources

A significant number of African economies are considerably dependent on natural resource exploitation.[29] It is therefore not surprising that natural resources play a role in explaining insurgency in Africa, and have been a key aspect of academic debates.

Collier and Hoeffler econometrically examined if greed or grievance is the cause of civil war in Africa. Based on their findings, they argue that "conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance,"[30] and that a large, poor, dispersed population significantly increases the risk of conflict. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, economic growth rate and primary commodity exports relative to national income are used as proxies for economic opportunity. That is, if a country has a low GDP per capita, a declining national income and high economic reliance on primary commodity export it will have a higher probability of civil war. Collier and Hoeffler stress the arbitrary nature of their proxies, and interpret low GDP per capita to be a proxy for either cheap rebel labor or low military capability of the government. Regardless of how to interpret the proxy, they find that lower GDP per capita increases the risk of conflict. They understand their second proxy, higher national economic growth, to indicate the availability of jobs. Increase in job opportunities means that the cost of recruitment to a potential insurgency is increased. The last factor, reliance on primary exports (such as oil, diamonds, metals, food, and beverages) has a strong correlation with civil war and they explain this relationship with the level of accessible funds for governments and insurgents alike. Beyond the three proxies for economic opportunity is a dispersed population, which they understand as a proxy for military feasibility: low population density increases the difficult for government to conduct a successful COIN campaign.[31]

The *greed-argument* resonated with the international community because it could be used to argue for straight forward policy initiatives, through sanctions on international trade of natural resource.[32] But the proxies are ambiguous as they do not necessarily measure what they were intended for and it is difficult to draw a conclusion on natural resources´ causality for insurgency. As mentioned by Collier and Hoeffler, GDP per capita might be a proxy for both military capacity and cheap rebel labor, and the causal relationship

[29] Paul Collier & Stephen O'Connell, "Opportunities, Choices and Syndromes", in Benno J. Ndulu, Stephen A. O'Connell, Robert H. Bates, Paul Collier and Chukwuma C. Soludo (eds.), *The Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa 1960-2000,*Vol.2 (Cambridge University Press,2008).
[30] Paul Collier, "Doing Well out of War: An Economic Perspective" in Mats Berdal & David M. Malone (eds.), *Greed & Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, (London: Lynne Rienner Boulders & London, 2002).
[31] Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler, "On the Incidence of Civil War in Africa", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46:13 (2002):13-28.
[32] Jeffrey Herbst, "Economic Incentives, Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa", *Journal of African Economies*, vol.9:3 (2000):270-294.

is unclear.[33] The assumption that a decline in economic growth is a proxy for lower employment opportunity and therefore a decrease in the cost of rebel labor is problematic because it does not take into account that civil wars usually follow a period of increased political violence, which often negatively affects the economy. Civil war in itself will usually also have a negative effect on economic growth so a high correlation between the two are self-evident without the latter necessarily being the cause of the former.[34]

The idea that economic reliance on primary commodity export increases the likelihood of civil war provokes a number of further studies that seek to test this relationship using a better proxy for the availability of natural resources. Ross finds that there is no significant relationship between primary commodities and the onset of civil war.[35] Buhaug and Rød find strong evidence that proximate lootable diamonds increases the risk of civil war.[36] Lujala, Gleditsch and Gilmore find that following the end of the Cold War the existence of diamonds in a given country increases the risk of civil war.[37] However in Humphreys´ study of the onset of civil war and diamond production, he does not find any significant relationship.[38] This is consistent with the view that conflicts are not caused by the availability of natural resources, *or greed*, but that these factors might play an important role for some insurgents as the conflict develops.[39]

The main critique of the greed-thesis is therefore the confusion of causality and correlation, as it is possible to draw two conclusions from above mentioned studies: insurgency is either initiated for profit through occupation of minefields, control of roadblocks etc. or insurgencies integrate these economic activities to sustain their insurgency.[40] In terms of greed or natural resources as a cause of insurgency in Africa, the current data does not allow for a more complex conclusion other than insurgency tends to occur more so in environments characterized by resources richness than scarcity.

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[33] Fearon and Laitin use GDP per capita to be a proxy for police and counterinsurgent weakness. See J Fearon and D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", (2003): 75-90.
[34] Nicholas Sambanis, "Conclusion: Using Case Studies to Refine and Expand the Theory of Civil War", in Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (eds.) *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, vol.1; Africa (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2005).
[35] Michael L. Ross, "What Do We Know About Natural Resources and Civil War", *Journal of Peace Research* vol.41:3 (2004):337-356.
[36] Halvad Buhaug & Jan Ketil Rød (2006) "Local Determinants of African civil wars, 1971-2001", *Political Geography* vol.25 (2006):315-335.
[37] Päivi Lujala, Nils Petter Gleditsch & Elisabeth Gilmore, "A Diamond Curse? Civil War and a Lootable Resource", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol.49:4 (2005):538-562.
[38] Macartan Humphreys, "Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 49:4 (2005): 508-537.
[39] Anthony Vinci, "Greed-Grievance Reconsidered: The Role of Power and Survival in the Motivation of Armed Groups", *Civil Wars* vol.8:1 (2007):25-45.
[40] Phillippe Le Billon, "The Political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts", *Political Geography* vol.20 (2001):561-584.

2.2-Grievance

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, it is commonsensical that a certain level of grievance is required for a group to pick up weapons and initiate an insurgency campaign. Grievance is here defined, according to Gurr's Relative Deprivation thesis, as the discrepancy between people's expectation and what they actually have.[41] A number of studies have focused on grievance and insurgency. Collier and Hoeffler find that objective grievance measured by individual inequality and political repression holds very little significance for civil war. They explain this by the widespread existence of groups with grievances. That is, there are simply too many groups with grievances for that to be a main cause of civil war.[42] Østby, Nordås and Rød argue that Collier and Hoeffler's use of a country-aggregated Gini coefficient as a proxy for inequality does not capture the dynamics of civil war as the Gini coefficient measures individual inequality, or vertical inequality, and civil war takes place between groups. Instead Østby et al. test group-based inequality, or horizontal inequality, regionally divided. Using the welfare measurements household assets and level of education as a proxy for group based grievance horizontal inequality, they find that if the regional welfare is below the national average it increases the risk of conflict breaking out in that specific region. If combined with the existence of natural resources in the region the risk of conflict is further increased. Their finding supports the conclusion of the previous section: resource rich environments have a higher risk of conflict.

Østby et al. furthermore find that it is not only interregional disparity that increases the risk of civil war but also intraregional inequality, as it decreases recruitment and mobilizing cost while the elite have relatively more resources for recruitment and mobilization.[43] Stewart includes cases outside Africa, but supports Østby et al.´s findings by pointing to the increased risk of civil war if specific horizontal inequalities exist. Stewart defines horizontal inequalities as perceived group-based inequalities and identifies four categories: economic, social, cultural and political. Economic horizontal inequalities include employment opportunity, income levels and general access to assets. Social inequalities include access to education, health care, housing etc. Cultural inequalities include recognition of languages, customs, norms etc. Political inequalities include political opportunity and access to power: control of presidency, representation in the cabinet and parliament etc. and is associated with the elites of the group. Stewart finds that all types of inequalities can lead to conflict but political inequalities have the highest single significance for conflict as it motivates political leaders to mobilize their constituency. If the elite previously held power the significance is increased. High socioeconomic inequality combined with high political inequalities has the highest

[41] T. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (1971):23-24.
[42] P. Collier & A. Hoeffler, "On the Incidence of Civil War in Africa", (2002):13-28.
[43] Gurdun Østby, Ragnhild Nordås & Jan K. Rød, "Regional Inequalities and Civil Conflict in Sub-Sahara Africa", *International Studies Quarterly*, 53 (2009):301-324.

correlation with conflict.[44] The two studies point out that while economic, cultural, and social horizontal inequalities can lead to conflict, the highest risk for conflict is associated with elite mobilization.

The above mentioned studies refer to Gurr´s relative deprivation thesis as a point of departure for their research by assuming that sufficient frustration will lead to political violence. While the main variable of Gurr´s thesis is relative deprivation or frustration, understood as discrepancy between a group´s expectation and their actual capability, he introduced two other important variables: which political institutions the political violence is directed against (legitimacy) and the coercive balance between the two opponents. The first variable dictates which issues can trigger the application of political violence, and the second is a determinant for the type of political violence applied: riot, turmoil, coup d´état, civil war etc.[45] Neither Østby et al. nor Stewart consider these two intervening variables. Another important critique is of their methodology, more particularly the conversion of observable statistics (welfare measurements and various political, economic, social and cultural inequalities measurements) to perception. Østby et al. and Stewart base their study on the assumption that macro indicators of inequality can translate into people's perceived inequality. This is problematic because a group might objectively be poor, or deprived, but not perceive themselves as poor. Objective measures might not be good proxies for perceptions. Taking the critique into account, the above mentioned studies suggest that insurgency is more likely to occur in environments marked by relative poverty and elite exclusion.

[44] Frances Stewart,"Horizontal inequalities as a cause of conflict: a review of CRISE findings*", Centre Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity*, 1 (2010).
[45] T. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel,* (1971).

2.3- Ethnicity

Conflicts in Rwanda, Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, and Sudan have often been described as ethnic conflicts, fueled by some form of primordial hatred between ethnic groups. Considering the high degree of ethnic diversity in Africa, both across the continent and within countries, it seems counterintuitive that primordial ethnic hatred is the key to understand the causes of insurgency. If so, it is safe to assume that there would be a much higher number of insurgencies on the continent. The primordial understanding of ethnicity is however a minority position and the dominant interpretation is that ethnic differences are constructed over time and often instrumentalized. For the purpose of this thesis, ethnicity is defined as difference. On a micro-level, ethnicity is about differences in individuals´ identity, but when it operates on a macro-level, ethnicity usually refers to patterns of differences in the whole society. As insurgency is a group activity, this section focuses on the macro-level.

There is little evidence to support a claim that ethnic differences are the primary cause of insurgency. Collier and Hoeffler find that high ethnic diversity holds little significance for insurgency and explains this by the cost of ethnic group mobilization: if an insurgency is mobilized on the basis of one of many smaller ethnic groups in a country, it will automatically exclude the recruitment of other ethnic identities to the same insurgency.[46] Fearon and Laitin point out that ethnic dominance, defined as between 45% and 95% of the population belonging to one ethnic group, increases the risk of insurgency.[47] In this, they supplement Collier and Hoeffler´s finding by stating that a dominant ethnic group would not need to mobilize outside that ethnic group and the cost of mobilization is therefore lower. These two studies are global, not confined to African cases, but they point out this valuable finding on ethnicity. However it requires qualification in an African context.

Posner´s case study of the Chewa and Tumbuka, two ethnic groups both living in the border regions of Zambia and Malawi, finds that the relative size of a specific ethnic group proportional to the national population determines if that ethnic group is politically mobilized or not. Both the political and ethnic distinctions between the Chewa and the Tumbuka become important when the groups constitute a large enough percentage of the national population to be viable political platformS.[48] Even though Posner does not define ethnic dominance in the two countries, his findings support Collier and Hoeffler, and Fearon and Laitin, as ethnic mobilization of the two groups in Malawi is a viable option as they constitute a significant voter base, while in Zambia they are simply too small and are therefore not mobilized.

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[46] Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in civil war", *Oxford Economic Papers,* 56 (2004): 563-595.
[47] J. Fearon & D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", (2003):75-90.
[48] Daniel Posner, "The political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi", *American Political Science Review*, 98:4 (2004):529-545.

Bates argues that when a state determines legal access to land based on ethnic labels, these can become lines of division when land access is threatened. Instability increases tension between those who have a legal right to land and those that do not. As political elites instrumentally use ethnic labels to gather political support in turbulent times, frequently in an exchange of political goods in the form of securing lands rights, these tensions are further amplified.[49] Akokpari's study of Côte d'Ivoire supports this argument by concluding that the insurgencies often revolves around ethnicity in a rhetorical sense, but fundamentally the conflict revolves around state resources "exacerbated by a struggle over citizenship and more specifically, who is legitimately entitled to participate in the struggle."[50] Both claims underline the importance of ethnicity as a cause of insurgency and only vaguely refers to the notion of common heritage, fate, culture and physical appearance.[51] Instead ethnicity can be a cause of insurgency when ethnic labels transcend their cultural connotations and define which groups that have, or do not have, access to political goods.

Mamdani examines the foreigner/indigenousness historical dynamic in Rwanda and finds that ethnic labels of Hutu and Tutsi were relatively fluid before the colonial period. Intermarriage was widely acceptable and ethnicity was usually transferred through patriarchal lines. The Belgian Colonial administration made the two ethnic identities static by institutionalizing them as bipolar legal entities, making them political identities. Tutsi, non-natives, were given legal privileges not offered to the natives, Hutu. The political identities therefore became significant during various outbreaks of political violence in post-colonial Rwanda, and especially during the Rwandan civil war initiated in 1990 and following genocide.[52] Mamdani´s finding not only accentuates the point made above: that ethnic labels can form the basis for insurgency when they include/exclude access to specific rights or political goods (they become political identities), but also that ethnic labels are constructed as they change over time.

Ethnicity is important as a cause of insurgency when the labels are also political identities that can grant access to political goods and/or is viable as a platform for political mobilization. When used instrumentally it creates lines of division, especially regarding political goods distributed by the state.[53] Identities are dynamic and constructed, meaning that ethnic labels can change in importance over time. This latter point is underlined by their non-monolithic nature indicated by Ekeh.[54] It is therefore not the ethnic labels by

[49] Robert Bates, *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 132-134.
[50] John Akokpari, ""You don't belong here": Citizenship, the State and Africa's Conflicts – reflections on Ivory Coast" in Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *The Roots of African Conflicts: the Causes & Cost* (Oxford: James Curry, 2008).
[51] David Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)
[52] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers,* (Oxford: James Curry Ltd, 2001): 19-40
[53] Einar Braathen, Morten Bøås & Gjermund Sæther, "Ethnicity Kills? Social struggles for power, resources and identities in the neo-patrimonial state", in Einar Braathen, Morten Bøås & Gjermund Sæther (eds.), *Ethnicity Kills? The Politics of War, Peace and Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Basingstoke/New York: Macmillan, B:, 2000):3-22.
[54] Peter P. Ekeh, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 17: 1 (1975):91-112.

themselves that can be the cause of insurgency, but when they are facilitated to advance specific political interests and to compete for power in the political arenas.

2.4-The State

The previous section on ethnicity as a cause of insurgency highlights the centrality of the state as the distributor of political goods, and despite their low success rate, most insurgencies were launched in an attempt to capture the state or carve out a section of the state´s territory. More contemporary insurgencies may not have attempted to capture the national capital, or have the capacity to this end, but state policies and power distribution have impacted their emergence. To some extent, insurgency can be understood as a response to the state's dysfunctional political institutions.[55] This section presents three themes with relevance for the role of the state: weak states; elite political behavior; and ungoverned spaces.

2.4.1-Weak States

A categorization of *weak state* usually focuses on the state's effectiveness in delivering goods and services to the population, usually including sustainable economic growth, legitimate institutions, ensuring the population's safety, controlling territory etc.[56] The concept is problematic because it does not further our understanding of the specific state's impact on insurgency. By suggesting a general status of weak state, the concept neglects that many states have significant weaknesses in specific sectors and strengths in others. By one measure of weak state from 2008, Mali scored extremely low on the *social welfare* indicator but very high on the *security* indicator while Sri Lanka scored very low on the security indicator but very high on the social welfare indicator, yet both states are labeled weak states despite significant differences in strengths.[57] In relation to insurgency exploring the specific dynamics of weakness have more explanatory value. Weak states can be a dominant cause of insurgency as they continuously fail the expectations of their citizens, hence they create grievance; are unable to fill the grievance void; or cannot co-opt the ethnic, religious or regional political elites; all of which pave the way for political inequality or exclusion.[58] When a state has a weak security apparatus, it cannot adequately handle external and internal security threats. External threats present a risk because a weak security apparatus will not be able to fend of neighboring countries' military or foreign insurgencies, as have been the case in Sierra Leone and Zaire (later the DRC).[59] In terms of internal threats, security apparatus with low capacity will tend to either provoke insurgency by applying a too harsh

[55] Morten Bøås & Kevin C. Dunn, *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 2007).
[56] Susan E. Rice & Stewart Patrick, "Index of State Weakness in the Developing World", *The Brookings Institution*(2008); Robert I. Rotberg "Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators" in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences,* (Princeton University Press, 2003).
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer & Brian Min, "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis", *World Politics*, 62:1 (2010):87-119,
[59] William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African State,* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

of a response to initial threats because they cannot distinguish between criminal activity and insurgencies in their initial stages, or motivate insurgency as they can act with impunity.[60]

2.4.2-Elite Political Behavior: Neopatrimonialism, Democratization, and Predatory Behavior

Instead of looking at state weakness, some literature understands the elite political behavior in Africa as neopatrimonialism. Neopatrimonialism and associated political behaviors have often been identified as a potential cause of insurgency in Africa.[61] Neopatrimonialism can be understood as the interaction between the rational-legal and patrimonial authority as understood by Weber,[62] where public norms are "formal and rational, but their social practice is often personal and informal."[63] As a political system based on neopatrimonial logic is inherently exclusive to the majority, while benefitting the few well-connected elites, it has difficulty in appeasing and accommodating the various grievances that has potential to cause insurgency. And it is therefore"…threats of retribution against opponents rather than general satisfaction with the status quo,"[64] and a continuous flow of patronage to the well-connected elites, that will keep the system relatively stable. Political elites will often sponsor groups who can ensure violent retribution and maintain weak state institutions, including a weak security apparatus, to avoid radical and significant challengers to the system. If the patronage network begins to fail, the alliances that ensured the relative stability of the state system breaks down and instead of upholding their alliance to the center, well-placed regional or local leaders within the network will begin to pursue power by capturing local power centers, usually by military means. It is not however the system of neopatrimonialism itself that is under attack but the failure of the state's leader to distribute state resources along the existing network of patronage. Williams argues that neopatrimonialism does not automatically cause insurgency but as its stability rests on the continuous ability of a ruler to sustain his patronage network; political and economic shocks can lead to state disintegration and the rise of insurgencies. An economic shock can come in the form of a drop in commodity prices or loss of development aid and a political shock will usually come in the form of democratization highly encouraged or demanded from external creditors.[65]

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[60] Jeffrey Herbst, "Conflict in Africa: armies, rebels and geography" in Clapham, C., Herbst, J., & Mills, G (eds.), *Big African States*, (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2006).
[61] Gero Erdmann and Ulf Engel "Neopatrimonialism Reconsidered: Critical Review and Elaboration of an Elusive Concept", *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 45:1 (2007): 95-119; Morten Bøås and Kathleen Jennings, "Rebellion and Warlordism: the spectrum of neopatrimonialism" in Daniel Bach & Mamoudou Gazibo (eds.), *Neopatrimonialism in Africa and Beyond*, (New York: Routledge, 2012).
[62] See Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" in Gerth H.H and Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946):77-128.
[63] G. Erdmann and U. Engel, "Neopatrimonialism Reconsidered: Critical Review and Elaboration of an Elusive Concept" (2007): 95-119.
[64] Paul D. Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011):56.
[65] *Ibid.* 55-71

A very robust finding on the relationship between civil war, other forms of political instability, and regime type is that partial or unconsolidated democracies with factionalism have a higher risk of political instability.[66] While Williams explains the relationship as due to the increase of political competition associated with democracy,[67] Bates argues that African leaders faced with democratization have a tendency to behave in a way that causes significant and specific state weakness, or failure, which can lead to political instability and insurgency. When leaders´ present or future income is at risk due to democratization in non-democratic countries, defeat in elections in democratic countries or drop in revenue, they will begin to reap rewards from the wealth of state while they still have access to them, simply stealing state resources and thereby weakening the state institutions, including the security sector. In Sierra Leone, for example, successive leaders had continuously weakened state institutions so when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) crossed the border from Liberia, there was a completely lack of an effective army to fend them off. There was furthermore little incentive for the population to defend the incumbent government as it frequently applied violence against its citizens as a means to stay in office.[68] One consequence of a state not having an effective security apparatus is that people will pick up arms and form militias, which has the potential to develop into a full scale insurgency.[69] Another major consequence of a weakened security sector is that neither the military nor the police are paid salaries and instead they riot, loot, sell their weapons, and even take up arms against government.[70] Effectively the state loses the "monopoly over the means of coercion" and allows for pockets of ungoverned spaces.[71]

2.4.3-Ungoverned Spaces

Nigeria, the DRC, Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola and South Africa, are the big African states in terms of population size and territory. While South Africa is the odd one out as the country has managed to build a strong bureaucratic state with a well-developed transport and communication infrastructure, the other five all face common challenges and been able to find viable solutions. The challenge has been how to govern effectively across a vast territory. All five countries have enclaves of their territory, which falls outside government control.[72] Control of territory, monopoly of violence[73], empirical sovereignty[74] or project of

[66] Jack A. Goldstone, Robert H. Bates, David L. Epstein, Ted Robert Gurr, Michael B. Lustik, Monty G. Marshall, Jay Ulfelder & Mark Woodward, "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability", *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 54: 1 (2010):190–208.
[67] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa,* (2011):55-71.
[68] W. Reno, *Warlord Politics and African State,* (1998)
[69] R. H. Bates, *When Things Fell Apart,* (2008).
[70] Robert H. Bates, "Political Conflict and State Failure", in Benno J. Ndulu, Stephen A. O'Connell, Robert H. Bates, Paul Collier, and Chukwuma C. Soludo (eds.) *Vol. 1 of The Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa, 1960-2000* (Cambridge University Press,2008):249-296.
[71] Robert H. Bates, "State Failure", *Annual Review of Political Science* vol. 11 (2008):2.
[72]Marina Ottaway, Jeffrey Herbst, and Greg Mills, "Africa's big states: toward a new realism*". Policy Outlook* (2004):1-8.

power across vast distances with often cumbersomely geography have been a challenge for African leaders throughout history[75], and the current trend is that insurgency emerges on the periphery of state control, often in rural areas, close to international border.[76,77] In this sense, "generalized disappointment if not disaffection toward state institutions made insurgency possible. Their often weak hold on the rural periphery made rebellion thinkable."[78] As argued by Bates, the lack of a monopoly of violence in certain regions of a country is a direct consequence of a ruler´s predatory behavior towards state institutions especially the security sector, consequentially causing a *hollow* military.[79] Ungoverned should however be understood as a spectrum ranging from the complete absence of government to the lack of delivery on key services associated with government to full delivery of services. In the North Kivu of eastern DRC it has been argued that there is no central authority present, effectively anarchy as understood in the general International Relations theory, and this has caused a security dilemma, where the increase of one group´s security decreases the security of others: The zero-sum power game.[80] Other places might not however have experienced the same level of government absence.

2.4.4-The State as a Cause of Insurgency

When examining the causality between the state and insurgency, a general notion of *weak state* does not illuminate the intricate dynamics causing insurgency. It is instead necessary to look at how elite political behavior led to specific weakness of the state, and further examine these weaknesses as a cause of insurgency. Williams points to the high risk of insurgency associated with neopatrimonial politics where economic shocks can lead to disintegration and democratization can increase violent political competition. Bates also points out the threats associated with democratization and economic shocks, but explains that it is predatory behavior of rulers that is the main cause of insurgency. Both dynamics can however leave spaces ungoverned where insurgencies have a chance to avoid military.

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[73] To use a Weberian term. See H.H. Gerth & C.W Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (New York, Oxford University Press: 1946):77-128.
[74] Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood", *World Politics*, 35:1 (1982):1-24.
[75] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control,* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[76] Scott Straus, "Wars do end! Changing patterns of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa." *African Affairs*, 00/00 (2012):1-23; Crawfrod Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960–2010*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Pres, 2012): 286.
[77] H. Buhaug & J. Rød, "Local Determinants of African civil wars, 1971-2001", (2006):315-335.
[78] C. Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960–2010*, (2012).
[79] R. Bates, "Political Conflict and State Failure", (2007).
[80] Dominic Burbidge, "The security dilemma in North Kivu, the Democratic Republic of the Congo", *Conflict Trends,* 3 (2009):42-49.

2.5-Greed, Grievance, Ethnicity or the State

The four debates in this chapter collectively represent the literature on dominant causes of insurgency in Africa. The literature on greed suffers from a confusion of correlation and causality, and the strongest conclusion to draw from here is that insurgency tends to take place in resource rich environments. The debate on grievance underlines that a certain level of grievance caused by economic, cultural, or welfare inequalities can lead to insurgency but the most consequential factor is elites' political marginalization. Debates on ethnicity suggest that primordial hatred makes little sense as a cause of conflict and neither does innate cultural differences. Instead, it is when an ethnic identity can be used to advance specific interest often associated with the distribution of the state's resources that it will be mobilized. In this case, the ethnic identity transcends what is usually associated with ethnicity (common heritage, fate, culture and physical appearance) to become a political identity.[81] Weakness of state institutions is caused by elites' political reaction, or behavior, to political or economic shocks and can cause insurgency as the state is inadequately equipped to handle challenges associated with governance. The loss of the monopoly on violence is especially problematic as infant insurgencies can avoid military defeat and have time and space to grow.

Just as no conflict is entirely unique, no conflicts are entirely alike so it is possible to draw similarities between the above discussed debates and the thesis' case study: Boko Haram, but also identify differences that can contribute to the ongoing debates.

[81] D. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (1985).

Chapter 3: Analysis

The objective of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the main causes of Boko Haram's insurgency based on the debates on insurgency in Africa, and to introduce religion as a cause of insurgency. The chapter firstly provides an explanation of the significance of the name: Boko Haram, and stresses the issues connected to the use of the name. This is followed by a timeline from the mid-1990s up to more recent events. The chapter goes on to explore each of the debates presented in the previous chapter in relations to Boko Haram then focuses on the religious dynamics.

3.1-Boko Haram: What is in a Name

A good point of departure for any study of Boko Haram is with the name. *Boko Haram*, *The Nigerian Taliban*, *Yusufiyya, Ahl-Sunna wal Jamma* (Companions of the Prophet),[82] *Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wa'l-Jihad 'ala Minhaj al-Salaf* (the Association of the People of the Sunna for the Missionary Call and the Armed Struggle), [83] and most recently the *Islamic State's West Africa Province* (ISWAP),[84] have all been used as names for the group. Some names originate from the group itself and others have been applied to the group by outsiders, typically the media. The best known is of course Boko Haram, which was given to the collective of Mohammed Yusuf´s followers by the neighbors of their first mosque, the Ibn Taimiyya Mosque in Maiduguri, and can loosely be translated from Hausa to English as 'Western education is forbidden'. The name gained traction amongst the Islamic community in northern Nigeria and in the southern-based media as the group´s reputation grew. For the northern-based Islamic community it represents an eccentricity that conveniently hides the link between the established Islamic organization and the group. The group's first official name *Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wa'l-Jihad 'ala Minhaj al-Salaf*, directly links the group to the well-established Islamic movement *Alhus Sunna*. For the southern-based media the name encompasses common islamophobic perceptions of irrationality, ferocity, and backwardness.[85] This name has however not been officially adopted by the group and a limited reductionist approach to it (deriving the group's antagonism to the western education from the name) has been refused by Sanni Umaru, the first man to proclaim leadership of the group following the death of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009. He states:

[82] Jacob Zenn, "Nigerian al-Qaedaism", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology,* 16 (2014):99-117.
[83] Andrea Bigaglia, "Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust: Reflections on the Genesis of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria", *Annual Review of Islam in Africa,* 11 (2012): 35-44.
[84] Tomi Oladipo, "Analysis: Islamic State strengthens ties with Boko Haram", *BBC*, 24 April 2015 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32435614, (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015).
[85] A. Bigaglia, "Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust: Reflections on the Genesis of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria",(2012).

> "Boko Haram actually means Western Civilisation is forbidden. The difference is that while the first gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the West, that is Europe, which is not true, the second affirms our belief in the supremacy of Islamic culture (not education), for culture is broader, it includes education but is not determined by Western Education."[86]

It becomes evident from the timeline below that various factions of the main group have broken off at and the group has only functioned as a coherent and cohesive unit in short intervals. Factionalism has been a constant for the group, a dimension that can be concealed by the use of just one name.[87] This thesis uses "Boko Haram" but in doing so acknowledges that the name denotes a broader group only loosely organized under the umbrella term.

3.2-Timeline: Boko Haram

Many accounts and reflections pinpoint Boko Haram´s insurgency to June 2009 when fighting between followers and security forces took place in the state capitals of Borno, Bauchi, Yoba and Kano. In order to examine the causes of the insurgency and gain a more comprehensive picture of the group, this thesis identifies three significant events: the murder of Mohammed Yusuf's mentor Shaykh Ja´far Mahmoud Adam in April 2007, the violent clashes in 2009, and the jail break in September 2010 that marked the reemergence of the group. The following timeline is divided accordingly.

3.2.1-Before the Murder of Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam

The initial Boko Haram group can be traced back to the mid-1990s. It functioned as a *hisba* group (a small group from a mosque community enforcing sharia, usually consisting of young men) under the leadership of Mallam Lawal at the Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi mosque in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in the northeastern corner of Nigeria. The popular Salafist movement Ahlus Sunna was running the mosque (Ahlus Sunna's role is explored further in section 3.6 on religion). Lawal was succeeded by Mohammed Yusuf, when Lawal left to further his Islamic education at the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia.[88] While occupying the position of youth leader, Yusuf toured the region, in and outside Nigeria, propagating his radical interpretation of Islam and his anti-establishment stance. His views had significant resonance with large segments of the population as it offered draconian punishments to corrupt government officials, and an

[86] Vanguard, "Boko Haram resurrects, declares total Jihad", *Vanguard*, Aug. 14 2009, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/boko-haram-ressurects-declares-total-jihad/> (retrieved June 11 2015).
[87] Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram and the Kidnapping of the Chibok Schoolgirls", *CTC Sentinel*, vo.7:5 (2014):1-7.
[88] Olaide Ismail Aro, "Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: Its Implication and Way Forwards toward Avoidance of Future Insurgency", *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 3:11 (2013): 1-8; A. Adesoji, "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria", (2010):95-108.

alternative state system founded in Islam.[89] As is common in Nigeria, his preaching is available on YouTube[90] and was distributed via tapes across the region. By the early 2000s Yusuf was not calling for external jihad (as oppose to internal jihad) against the Nigerian state but he did allow for *hijra*, withdrawal from a society that is perceived as corrupt and heretic. In 2001 Muhammed Alli, another youth leader at the Alhaji Ndimi Mosque, led a hijra of several hundred followers to establish an Islamic community in the small village of Kanamma, Yobe State.[91] Alli's group became known as *the Nigerian Taliban* by local media because they wrote Taliban on the side of some of their vehicles, called their compound Afghanistan and adhered to a radical Salafism.[92] The group also managed to run military training camps, kidnap local for use as recruits,[93] and burn down a police station.[94] Violence between civilians, the local authorities and the Nigerian Taliban culminated in December 2003, when security forces sieged their compound and killed many of the members, including Alli. Survivors returned to join Yusuf at his newly established mosque in Maiduguri.[95] In 2004 the general group furthermore executed two attacks on police stations. In the first incidence, the group managed to kill several policemen, but approximately 27 members were killed. The second incidence is more successful as the group kidnapped 12 policemen, and the attempt to trace and catch the group failed.[96]

While Alli was in Kanamma leading one faction of the broader movement, Yusuf established the Ibn Taimiyyah Mosque in Maiduguri. The name signifies adherence to the preaching of Ibn Taimiyyah, a radical Salafi theorist living in Damascus during the Mongolian invasion in the late 13th and early 14th century, and is a move away from the Saudi inspired Salafism, Wahhabism. Wahhabism was preached by Yusuf's mentor Ja´far Mahmoud and the Alhus Sunna.[97] The physical move and the ideological shift away from Alhus Sunna, is perhaps the first time the group completely distinguishes itself and is officially established under the name Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wa'l-Jihad.[98] Funds for the group are said to have come from Yusuf's

[89] Ahmad Murtada, "*Boko Haram" in Nigeria: Its Beginning, Principles and Activities in Nigeria,* (SalafiManhaj:2013)
[90] See alhajimusa007, "TafsirinTauba 1-2, Mallam Muhammad Yusuf Maiduguri.flv", [video] (Youtube, 5 Jun. 2011)< https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3NcgQv-LVM> (retrieved 1 June 2015); sunnahization, "MUHAMMAD YUSUF 2.3gp", [video] (Youtube, 8 Oct. 2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mxrt07Gl6G0> (retrieved 1 June 2015)
[91] Jacob Zenn, "Nigerian al-Qaedaism", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology,* 16 (2014): 99-117.
[92] Anonymous, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria:A Case Study of Boko Haram", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 42 (2012):118-144.
[93] David Cook, "The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria", *CTC Sentinel,* 4:9 (2011):3-5.
[94] Andrew Walker, "What Is Boko Haram?", *Special report*, 308 (2012):1-16; John Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect", *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 26:1 (2014):33-52; Freedom C. Onuha, "Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect", *Al Jazeera Centre for Studies Reports,*(2012):1-6; Gbemisola Animasawun & Luqman Saka. " Causal analysis of radical Islamism in northern Nigeria's Fourth Republic", *African Security Review,* 22:4 (2013):216-231.
[95] G. Animasawun & L. Saka. " Causal analysis of radical Islamism in northern Nigeria's Fourth Republic", (2013):216-231.
[96] M. Reinert & L. Garçon, "Boko Haram: A chronology",(2014)
[97] John Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect", *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 26:1 (2014):33-52.
[98] Andrea Brigaglia, "Boko Haram: Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust: Reflections on the Genesis of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria", (2012):35-44.

network in Saudi Arabia, established while on *Hajj,* and/or come from *zakat* (portion of a Muslim´s wealth obligatorily donated to the poor) paid by businessmen. Both could easily be the case as Yusuf travelled to Saudi Arabia on multiple occasions and because he is well known throughout the region around Lake Chad by this point in time.[99]

In 2004, Boko Haram members were caught smuggling AK-47s across the border into Nigeria.[100] In 2005 Operation Sawdust took place, during which Boko Haram members were arrested, including Yusuf, and undefined plans to carry out operations were uncovered. Yusuf was not released until President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua took over office from Olusegun Obasanjo in 2007. In this time, a number of security briefs had also been submitted to the government of Borno state, the Presidency and the federal Police Headquarter, reporting that Yusuf and his groups were manufacturing bombs.[101]

The various splits within the Islamic community illustrates the decentralized character of Islam in northern Nigeria, and how Islam is constantly used for political ends by the different leaders, and by this is provides a platform for competition between the leaders. The group finally situated around the Ibn Taimiyyah Mosque was furthermore stocking up arms, underlining Yusuf's militancy and his expectation of confrontation with the government.

3.2.2-The murder of Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam

Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam was a leading Imam of Ahlus Sunna and well-known in the Islamic community in northern Nigeria, attracting millions of followers across the north. Yusuf became a representative of Ahlus Sunna in Maiduguri around 2000. Due to his preaching founded in radical Salafist beliefs, he fell out with the Ahlus Sunna´s leadership and initiated a process of establishing his own mosque and accompanying compound. By 2003, a verbal public conflict took place between Ja'far Mahmoud and Yusuf. The leadership of Ahlus Sunna critiqued Yusuf's position against government employment and western education. Publicly Yusuf accused Ja'far Mahmoud of being a stooge of the government and *ulama* (Islamic scholar) of the West, and Ja'far Mahmoud in return accused Yusuf and his followers for being *Kharijites*, one of the first known violent Islamic groups.[102] While they both adhered to Salafism and its provision for creating an Islamic state, they differed on the means of creating the state. Yusuf saw a militant path as legitimized by religious provisions and Ja'far Mahmoud argued for cooperation with government on

[99] A. Walker, "What Is Boko Haram?", (2012):1-16; J. Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect", (2014):33-52.
[100] D. E. Agbigboa, "Peace at Daggers Drawn? Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria", (2014):41–67.
[101] N.D Danjibo, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence: The 'Maitatsine' and 'Boko Haram' Crises in Northern Nigeria,", *Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan*, (2009):1-21; Kieran E. Uchehara, "Peace Talks Initiatives between the Boko Haram and Nigerian Government", *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, vol. 5:6(1) (2014): 130-138.
[102] J. Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect", (2015):33-52.

the creation of an Islamic state.[103] Leaders within Ahlus Sunna have been forced to leave the organization on previous occasions due to their association with funding for militant campaigns, and while the public debate between Ja'far Mahmoud and Yusuf concerned interactions with the secular government, their disagreement also revolved around the use of funding from abroad.[104] The conflict ended abruptly outside Ja'far Mahmoud's mosque in Kano in 2007 when he was gunned down. By now, it's widely acknowledged that Yusuf arranged for the assassination.[105] The assassination was distinctly executed: On the 13th of April a commando unit shot him with automatic rifles after he led the *fajr*, the first prayer of the day, at his mosque in Kano. In the days leading up to the assassination, Ja'far Mahmoud had received multiple death threats and was even sent a burial garment.[106]

The split between Ja'far Mahmoud and Yusuf is mainly found outside of doctrine, in their domestic strategy, accentuated by the split occurring after the disagreement over international funds and due to their difference approach to the Nigerian government. Alli's earlier hijra is also an example of the divergence of strategy, as in doing so he strived to establish an alternative to the Nigerian state, whereas Ja'Far Mahmoud wanted to cooperate with the state.

3.2.3-July: the Month of No Return

From Ja´far Mahmoud´s assassination to the clashes between Boko Haram followers and security forces in June 2009, the group was occupied with recruitment and obtaining funds. It is during this period that Boko Haram member, Buju Foi, is appointed commissioner of religious affairs in Borno State by State Governor Modu Sheriff,[107] and that Yusuf is bailed out by his political patrons.[108] It is not until June 2009 that the group is in the spot light again. While on their way to a funeral on the 11th of June 2009 a few Boko Haram members were detained by members of Operation Flush, a state-led security initiative to curb armed banditry, for driving without crash helmets. Other members saw this as an intentional provocation, which resulted in a shootout between Boko Haram and the authorities where a number of casualties occurred on

[103] Anonymous, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram",(2012):118-144.
[104] A. Brigaglia, "Boko Haram: Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust", (2012):35-44.
[105] Andrea Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Daʿwa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Shaykh Jaʿfar Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007)", *Islamic Africa*, vol. 3:1 (2012):1-23.
[106] Stuart Elden, "The geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigeria's 'war on terror'", *The Geographical Journal,* 180:4 (2014):414–425; Andrea Brigaglia, "Boko Haram: Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust: Reflections on the Genesis of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria", *Annual Review Of Islam In Africa,* vol.11 (2012):35-44.
[107] D. E. Agbigboa, "Peace at Daggers Drawn? Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria", (2014):41–67.
[108] Johannes Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram And Its Muslim Critics: Observations From Yobe State", in Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, (African Studies Centre; 2014):33-62.

both sides.[109] Yusuf responded by releasing a video statement promising revenge. A wave of revenge attacks were initiated on the 26th of July, first against a police station in Bauchi, capital of Bauchi State, and then against police and government infrastructure in Borno, Bauchi, Yobe, Gombe Kano Katsina states. Between the 26th and the 30th of July more than 800 people were killed by Boko Haram and security forces, including at least 30 police officers, and a large number of Boko Haram members and civilians. These attacks ended with a large-scale attack on the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque and its compound.[110] Footage from the event clearly shows that police assassinated a number of people, including the leader, Yusuf. Police afterwards claimed that he was killed trying to escape custody but his handcuffed mutilated body suggests otherwise.[111] Whereabouts of the majority of Yusuf's followers after his extra-judicial execution are unknown, but some left Nigeria for training camps in the Sahel and Abu Abubakar Shekau, the next leader after Yusuf, left for northern Cameroon.[112]

3.2.4-Post-2010

The group re-surfaced one year later, first in a video where Shekau calls for revenge against the Nigerian police and military,[113] later in a prison break in Bauchi freeing around 700 inmates,[114] and in a number of assassinations of Imams and other public figures speaking out against the group.[115] The group has since evolved ideologically, tactically and strategically. In 2010, the group was primarily occupied with assassinations restricted to the northeast of Nigeria. A significant amount of bank robberies, raids of police stations, hospitals and pharmacies followed, along with a large number of bombings. The two most significant bombing of this period occurred in Abuja in June and August of 2011 at the national police headquarters and the United Nations representation respectively.[116,117] While other attacks had occurred in Abuja before, the two attacks´ targets and magnitude signify a definitive move beyond the northeastern

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[109] Freedom Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria", in Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, (African Studies Centre; 2014):158-192.
[110] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence*, (London: Amnesty International, 2012).
[111] AfricanNewslive.Com, *AfricanNewslive.com - Video shows Nigeria 'executions'*[video],(AfricanNewslive.com, 9 March 2010)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0Yj5EnP-xU> (retrieved the 6 June 2015);
Saharatv, *"Boko Haram" leader Mohammed Yusuf Interrogation before his execution by Nigerian security agents,* [video], 3 Aug. 2009, < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePpUvfTXY7w> (retrieved the 6 June 2015).
[112] A. Walker, "What Is Boko Haram?",(2012):1-16; J. Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect", (2014):33-52.
[113] France24, "The Boko Haram terror chief who came back from the dead", *France 24*, 25 Sep. 2014, <http://www.france24.com/en/20120111-terror-chief-boko-haram-imam-shekau-youtube-nigeria-goodluck-jonathan-al-qaeda-oil> (retrieved 2 May 2015).
[114] Sani Muh'd Sani, "Nigeria: Attack On Bauchi Prison - Boko Haram Frees 721 Inmates", *allAfrica*, 8 September 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201009090034.html> (retrieved 1 May, 2015).
[115] A. Walker,"What is Boko Haram?", (2012).
[116] Al Jazeera, "Blast rocks police headquarters in Nigeria", *Al Jazeera* , 16 June 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/06/201161611145134480 7.html> (retrieved 10 June 2015).
[117] BBC, "Abuja attack: Car bomb hits Nigeria UN building", *BBC*, 27 Aug. 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14677957> (1 May 2015).

region, and demonstrates a new scale of violence. The latter factor is further emphasized by the increased use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and suicide bombs during this period.[118] In early 2012, one dissident group announced its establishment. Jama'atu Ansaril Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan (Ansaru), Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa, can be seen as an international affiliate of Boko Haram operating beyond the borders of Nigeria: in Mali, Cameroon and Chad. The faction is closer to the other Islamic militant groups in the Sahel, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), and is responsible for a number of kidnappings of foreign nationals. Another faction broke off from the main group in July 2011, under the name Yusufiya Islamic Movement (YIM) but despite their initial critique of the main Boko Haram group's civilian victimization, they have done little to make themselves noticeable.[119]

Boko Haram was able to hold some territory in the Sambisa Forests from 2014 in the far northeastern corner of the country, and to attack targets beyond Nigeria, in Cameroon[120] and more recently in Chad.[121] The Nigerian government has responded to the insurgency by allocating more funds to the security sector, deploying a large number of troops and fighter jets to the northeastern corner of the country, and by declaring a state of emergency in 2013 across three northeastern states of Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa. Civilian vigilantes and youth groups have also been given significant leeway in issuing punishment of alleged Boko Haram members and affiliates. Armed with rudimentary weapons these groups have conducted raids on homes, hacked and tortured suspects to death, and acted as part of investigations by handing alleged members over to authorities.[122] Despite these measurements casualties have escalated gradually throughout the insurgency and by 2014 more than 7.500 have been documented.[123]

3.2.5-Observations from the History of Boko Haram

Boko Haram´s first prominent leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed by Nigerian security forces and his death increased animosity towards the state amongst his followers. It is impossible to say if Boko Haram would have initiated their insurgency had Yusuf not been killed, but it is well-known that they collected weapons and prepared for some form of confrontation. The violent approach from the state therefore seems to have been counter-productive and provoked an immediate violent response from the group.

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[118] F. Onuoha. "Boko Haram And The Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat In Nigeria", (2014).
[119] Jacob Zenn. "Ansaru: A Profile of Nigeria's Newest Jihadist Movement", *Terrorism Monitor* 11, no. 1 (2013).
[120] Conway Waddington. "Boko Haram makes its presence felt in Cameroon", *Africa Conflict Monthly Monitor,* September Edition (2014):48-52.
[121] Al Jazeera, "Boko Haram launches first deadly attack in Chad", *Aljazeera,* 14 Feb. 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/02/boko-haram-launches-deadly-attack-chad-150213114519161.html> (retrieved 10 June 2015).
[122]International Crisis Group. "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency", *Africa Report , 216*(2014),
[123] Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. "Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence", *Conflict Trends*, no. 33(2015).

Yusuf´s death created a martyr. Since his death the group has consistently emphasized this point. While this is not a cause of the insurgency, it is important to note for future studies.

Islam has in Nigeria often been used rhetorically as a tool against corruption, and Yusuf's anti-establishment stance follows this general trend. This topic is explored further in section 3.5 on the Nigerian state as a cause of insurgency and 3.6 on religion as a cause of insurgency.

Leadership struggles are common in Boko Haram and amongst the Islamic community in Nigeria in general. Mohammed Alli´s hajri in 2002 effectively created a "new" faction, and Abu Abubakar Shekau and Sanni Umaru both claiming leadership following the killing of Mohammed Yusuf illustrate this. The killing of Ja'far Mahmoud demonstrates leadership struggles can turn violent. As evident from the section on religion, leadership struggles and decentralization are trademarks of Islam organizations in Nigeria.

Boko Haram is not a coherent and cohesive group with a central leader; instead it should be understood as a patchwork of smaller factions operation under one *umbrella* organization.[124] This point is important for the genesis of the group as it is impossible to trace an evolution of one specific group and then generalize it to the entire body of organizations. This approach to understand the dominant causes behind insurgencies in Africa is common but as evident in the section on religious organizations in Nigeria (3.6), Boko Haram can broadly be seen as a militant radical off-shoot from the movement for the purification of Islam initiated by Abubakar Gumi following independence.[125] This does not necessarily mean that Boko Haram's insurgency was caused by dynamics within the Islamic community, but it is a factor that should be investigated further.

[124] Da'wah Coordination Council of Nigeria (DCCN), "*Boko Haram" Tragedy: Frequently Asked Questions*" (Minna: DCCN, 2009), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/65486839/The-Boko-Haram-Tragedy-26-FAQs-by-DCCN> (Retrieved Sep. 10, 2015); Sahara Reporters, "Boko Haram Reportedly Has Complex Organizational Structure", *Sahara Reporters*, July 15 2012. <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/boko-haram-reportedly-has-complex-organizational-structure> (retrieved September 10, 2015); The Saturday Sun, "Boko Haram's Divided House", *The Saturday Sun*, July 24, 2012, <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/blog/?p=89197> (retrieved Sep. 10, 2015).
[125] Christopher Clapham (ed.) *African Guerrillas*. (Oxford, James Correy Ltd:1998)

3.3-Greed-Natural Resources in Nigeria

Oil is the main natural resource in Nigeria and in 2009 it accounted for 95% of foreign exchange earnings and 75% of government revenue.[126] It is however unevenly geographically distributed, concentrated in the

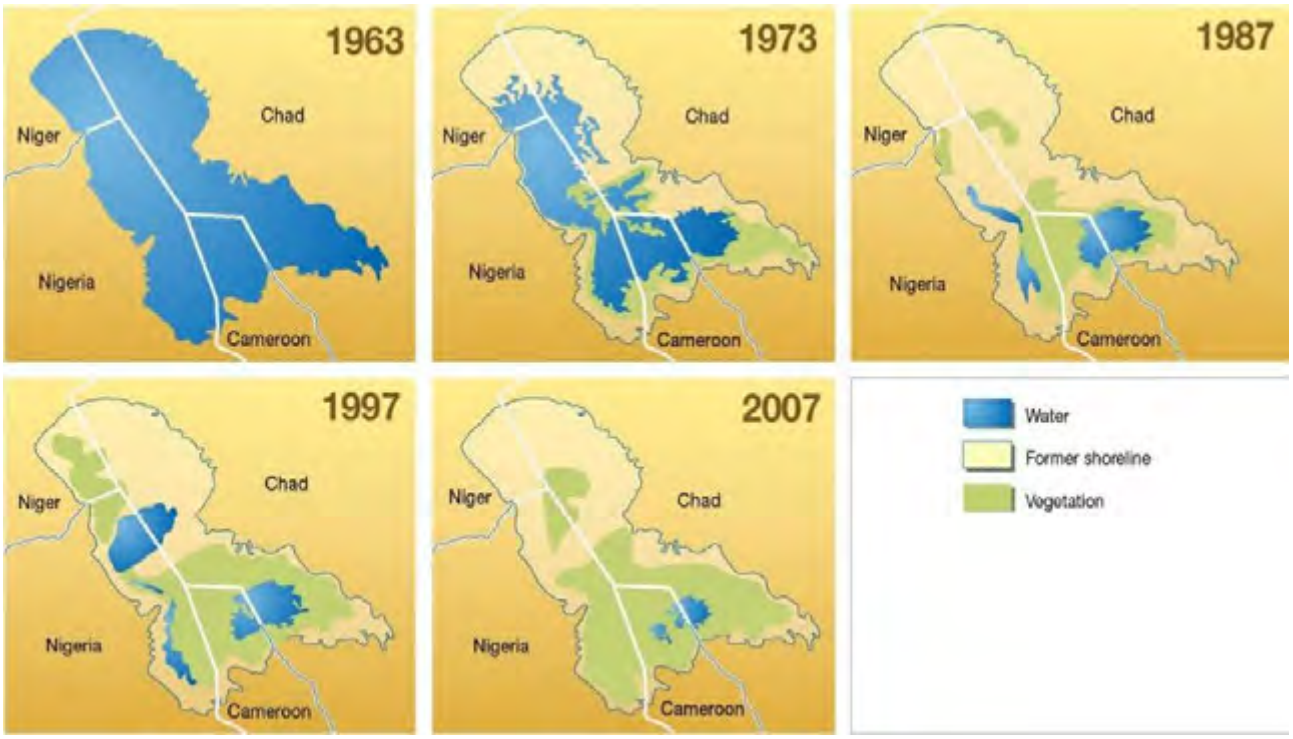

Figure 2, Source: United Nations Environmental Program, "Lake Chad: almost gone", *UNEP,* 2008, <http://www.unep.org/dewa/vitalwater/article116.hml> (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015)

Niger Delta in the South South geopolitical zone.[127] The Biafran War and a number of insurgencies took place in this region and oil was an underlying theme for both.[128] The resource rich environment in the Niger Delta resonates well with the assumption made in Chapter 2 on natural resources and insurgency. The North East might potentially be well-endowed with oil deposits but exploration is yet to be confirmed, and no other natural resources have been reported in this region.[129]

[126] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report Nigeria 2008-2009*, (United Nations Development Programme, 2009).
[127] Barungi, B., Ogunleye, E., & Zamba, C. "Nigeria", *African Economic Outlook*, (2015).
[128] On insurgency in the Niger Delta see Cyril Obi and Siri Aas Rustad, *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2011); On the Biafran War see Michael Gould, *The Biafran War: The Struggle for Modern Nigeria*, (I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd: 2013).
[129] John-Thomas Didymys, "Nigeria: Boko Haram crisis and the regional geopolitics of oil", *Allvoices,* 28 Oct. 2014, <http://www.allvoices.com/article/100001851> (retrieved 20 June 2015); Ndahi Marama, "Buhari to resume search for oil along Chad Basin", *Vanguard,* 20 April 2015, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/buhari-to-resume-search-for-oil-along-chad-basin/,> (retrieved 20 June 2015); Edinburg International, "Chadian Oil and Instability in the Lake Chad Basin", *Edinburgh International*, 22 Oct. 2014, <http://edinburghint.com/insidetrack/chadian-oil-and-instability-in-the-lake-chad-basin/> (retrieved 20 July 2015).

The environment where Boko Haram emerged stands in stark contrast to the oil rich southeast, where exploration began decades ago, and to the resource rich environment described in the literature on insurgency in Africa. The northeast is a low-resource environment with no lootable natural resource, no large-scaled industry and high rates of unemployment. And while the insurgencies in the Niger Delta have been able to profit, or at least sustain their insurgency, from oil bunkering[130], Boko Haram's sources of funds are relative diversified including, membership fees, zakat, some external funding, and bank robberies.[131] Resource scarcity in the northeast is heavily marked by the degradation of Lake Chad (see figure 2.). The lake's general basin drainage was inhabited by 22 million people in 1991 and had grown to 37 million by 2006. The lake currently only covers about 5 % of the area it did in 1963. Small scaled conflicts have occurred because people depending on the lake for their livelihood followed the receding shores, and found themselves in other countries and in other people's territory who also depended on the lake. Other conflicts have occurred over the legal rights of irrigation projects, but these conflicts are more often than not due to poor water management by the governments involved.[132] The southbound expansion of the Sahara has also contributed to the increased migration, both rural-urban and rural-rural, but it is especially the degradation of Lake Chad that forced people to the cities.[133] The environment from which Boko Haram emerged from is therefore characterized by a scarcity of resources and dramatic change of the environment; not the resource richness usually associated with insurgency in Africa.

[130] See C. Obi and S. Rustad, *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence,* (2011).
[131] F. Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria", (2014).
[132] Eric Odada, Lekan Oyebande, & Johnson Oguntola, "Lake Chad: Experience and lessns learned brief", (2005).
[133] Nicasius Achu Check," The Rise of Radical and Asymmetric Armed Insurgents in the Central African Sub-Region: A Causal Analysis", *Policybrief*, no.113 (2014):1-7.

3.4-Grievances in Nigeria

Upon gaining independence on the 1st of October 1960, Nigeria was a myriad of different ethnic, language, and religious groups with a population of roughly 40 million people divided into three states. The groups' common colonial past was consolidated by their combination into one single colonial entity in 1914 by Lord Frederick Lugard. The north of the colonial state was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani, the southwest by the Yoruba, and the southeast by the Igbo. Each region had some level of coherency often in the form of religious affiliation to Islam, Christianity, or traditional African religions, but significant minority groups existed within each region. In comparison to other African colonies, each region could numerically have formed its own country easily.[134] Today Nigeria has a population of around 180 million consisting of about 350 ethnic groups, and close to 500 languages spread across 1 million square kilometres.[135] Group divisions in many forms underline Nigeria as a polity and rapid state creation has been a mechanism to prevent potential conflicts between these. Consequentially the country currently consists of six geopolitical zones: the North West, the North Central, the North East, the South West, the South East and the South (see Figure 1, page IV), 36 states (and the Federal Capital Territory) and 774 local government areas (LGAs). Religious and ethnic affiliation have furthermore been left out of national censuses following controversies of censuses carried out in the 1950s and 1960s, and the Biafran War in 1967-1970. This means that it is impossible to obtain exact numbers on these population groups.[136] The data used below is therefore regionally based. Even if reliable data was available on ethnic and religious compositions it might not provide particularly fruitful as neither are homogenous groups. Ethnicity can be very fluid in Nigeria as groups can merge with each other, create new ethnic identities or claim a sub-group of one ethnicity.[137] Islam in Nigeria, and elsewhere, is marked by decentralization and a large number of Islamic branches and organizations exist, making it inadequate to treat Muslims as one category. The same argument is applicable to the six geopolitical zones. While the three Northern zones are predominately Muslim and the three Southern are Christian, each zone has enclaves dominated by a regional minority religion.[138] This does not make it unproductive to examine grievances based on these categories, but conclusions should be drawn with caution.

All geopolitical zones in Nigeria have some level of social, political or economic grievance, but the North East, where the far majority of Boko Haram's activity takes place and where the epicenter of the group's insurgency is located, is the most deprived geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The North East consists of the states:

[134] Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the present*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009).
[135] Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>, (retrieved 30 June 2015).
[136] Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Nigeria since Independence: Crippled Giant*, (Bloomington:Indiana University Press, 1998).
[137] Ukoha Ukiwo "Chapter 9: Managing Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria", in Yoichi Mine, Frances Stewart, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, and Thandika Mkandawire (eds.), *Preventing violent Conflict in Africa: Inequalities, Perceptions, Institutions*, (Palgrave Macmillan,2013)
[138] A. Alao, "Islamic radicalisation and violent extremism in Nigeria", (2013):127-147.

Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, and Borno, and is along with the North West the poorest zones in Nigeria by most socioeconomic measurements: food poverty, absolute poverty, relative poverty, and proportion of people living under a dollar a day.[139] The North East has the lowest youth literacy, the least access to improved drinking water, the least access to improved sanitation, the smallest amount of small and medium businesses per 100,000 people, and the lowest percentage of citizens watching television and reading the newspaper.[140] The North East zone scores lowest on the Human Development Index (HDI) and highest on the Human Poverty Index of all regions in Nigeria. In terms of intrastate inequality the region scores 0.42, which is close to the national average of 0.44.[141] The literature on insurgency in Africa suggests that scoring low on socioeconomic measurements reduces the cost of recruitment and thereby increases the risk of insurgency, but the most significant factor suggested by the literature is political marginalization.

Political marginalization in Nigeria is an important and complex issue because the federal state is the main distributor of goods and most non-oil producing states´ revenue is heavily reliant on this allocation. Throughout Nigeria´s political dispensation, the North West has been the best represented geopolitical zone in the executive council, and the northern zones have combined provided nine heads of the executive in comparison to the four by the southern zones. The leadership of the legislative and the armed forces is also historically dominated by the northern zones, while southern zones have been better represented in the judiciary, and in the civil services.[142] The North East has however only produced one Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who was assassinated in 1966, and one Chief Justice.[143] This underlines that a North-South dichotomy hides the disparities within the two regions, as the North West is far better politically represented than the North East. A closer look reveals that the North West's political representation does not translate into better socioeconomic conditions for the population living in the zone.

The North East is currently politically marginalized compared to the North West and the southern zones, despite numerous formal and informal mechanisms implemented to avoid marginalization of any specific group. Many of the mechanisms have, however, relied on balancing the North-South rivalry, not the North-North rivalry.[144] The large budgets administrated by the individual states and the first-past-the-post electoral system practiced in the state governor election, have both contributed to the intense and often violent political competition on a state level. While the mechanism focused on balancing the north-south rivalry have marginalized individual regions in the north, the first-past-the-post system in gubernatorial election

[139] Paul Rogers, "Nigeria: The Generic Context of The Boko Haram Violence", *Oxford Research Group: Monthly Global Security Briefing*, (2012):1-5.
[140] Michael Olufemi Sodipo, "Mitigating Radicalism in Northern Nigeria", *Africa Security Brief*, 26 (2013):1-8.
[141] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report Nigeria 2008-2009*, (United Nations Development Programme, 2009)
[142] U, Ukiwo, "Chapter 9: Managing Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria", (2013).
[143] Guy Arnold, *Africa: A Modern History*, (Atlantic Books, London; 2005).
[144] U, Ukiwo, "Chapter 9: Managing Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria", (2013).

have marginalized smaller groups on a state level.[145] Despite the mechanisms put in place to avoid marginalization, political domination and marginalization still take place. The political system in Nigeria is explored further in the section 3.5 on the Nigerian state as a cause of insurgency.

Boko Haram's regional context provided above stresses that the North East is marginalized politically and socioeconomically. The literature on insurgency in Africa suggests that these two variables increase the risk of insurgency as the political elites have incentive to mobilize the masses, who are cheaply recruited to the insurgency. This helps explain the geographical location of Boko Haram in the North East geopolitical zones. As with all assumptions on people perceptions based on observable statistics, this does not adequately account for peoples´ perceptions, but it does provide a foundation for the assumption that recruitment is cheap.

The poverty levels mentioned in the above do not however reflect the economic decline in the Northeast. As a result of the oil boom and the SAPs implemented in Nigeria, the cotton and the agricultural industry declined significantly across the northern states. The oil boom and the SAPs caused an overvaluation of the Nigerian currency, and made export of labor intensive products and foreign investment unfavorable, meaning that new industries, or the reemergence of old ones, have not occurred in northern Nigeria. This has caused a migration of low-skilled manpower to urban areas, which has put additional pressure on an already burdened job market.[146] Interestingly enough, socially reinforcing cleavages are present on a national level and in some states but limited in the North East as the low socioeconomic levels cut across most identity-based groups.[147] As mentioned in the previous section on greed and natural resources in Nigeria, the oil discoveries under Lake Chad did not occur until 2012 and as Boko Haram's insurgency began before that, there is little evidence supporting that the population should be aggrieved by the lack of profit from the natural resources, which increases the risk of insurgency as suggested in the previous chapter. Similar to the conclusion made in the previous section on greed and natural resources, the environment where Boko Haram is located is marked by increased scarcity of resources in various forms; economic, natural, or social. The literature on grievance as a cause of insurgency in Africa reflects this, and the environment where Boko Haram initiated their insurgency is typical.

As mentioned in the introduction, the literature on the causes of Boko Haram's insurgency is heavily dominated by explanations pointing out the poor socio-economic conditions of the North East. But while the region is relatively deprived, insurgencies have occurred across Nigeria´s territory. The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger

[145] Isaac Olawale Albert, "Explaining 'godfatherism ' in Nigerian Politics", *African Sociological Review*, 9:2 (2005):79-105; Lambert Uyi Edigin, "Political Conflicts and Godfatherism in Nigeria: A Focus on the Fourth Republic", *African Research Review*, 4:4 (2010):174-186.
[146] International Crisis Group, Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict, *African Report,* 168 (2010).
[147] U. Ukiwo, "Chapter 9: Managing Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria", (2013).

Delta (MEMD) groups, the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), and the Niger Delta Vigilante in 1966 are all violent reactions to some level and form of grievance.[148] The Maitatsine Movement, the Nigerian Muslim Brotherhood led by Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zackzaky, and the Dan Kaleri groups are all examples of violent groups specific to northern Nigeria, and Alao records at least twelve violent radical Islamic groups in Northern Nigeria.[149]

The dependent variable, insurgency, is present in many geopolitical zones of Nigeria, exemplified by the sheer number of insurgencies spread across Nigeria. Many geopolitical zones therefore provide fertile ground for insurgency and it is difficult to conclude that the North East is particularly prone to insurgency due the high level of objective regional grievance. Boko Haram's appeal is furthermore relatively limited and does not represent a secessionist struggle of the North East or a broader based specific grievance from a neglected region or people. This has more so been the case with the MASSOB and the OPC.[150] Instead it seems that Boko Haram is able to recruit relatively cheaply because of the lack of job opportunities and the general level of poverty across social classes, which essentially repeats Fearon and Laitin points that what matters is that "economic opportunities are so poor that the life of a rebel is attractive to 500 or 2,000 young men."[151] There is little evidence in the Nigerian context to support the prominent assumption that insurgency occurs in regions experiencing relative grievance, simply because it is not possible to isolate the dependent variable.

[148] Allswell Osini Muzan,"Insurgency in Nigeria: Addressing the causes as part of the solution", *African Human Rights Law Journal* vol.14 (2014):217-243.
[149] Abiodun Alao, "Islamic radicalization and violence in Nigeria: A country report." *Security and Development,* (2009).
[150] J.N.C Hill, *Nigeria since Independence: Forever Fragile?* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2012).
[151] J. Fearon & D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", (2003):88.

3.4-Ethnicity

The ethnic dimension of Boko Haram is rarely addressed by the group or reflected in the literature on Boko Haram. The literature on causes of insurgency in Africa suggests that ethnic labels will usually play a role in politics, and by extension conflict, if they become political labels or political identities, allowing access to state resources and political goods, or if they are viable platform to mobilize for elections. There are more than 350 ethnic groups in Nigeria, but the big three groups in Nigeria constitute more than half of the population: the Hausa/Fulani accounts for around 30%, and the Yoruba and the Igbo for around 20% each, with the Yoruba being slightly larger. The smaller but still significant groups are the Ijaw with around 10% of the population, the Kanuri and the Lbibio with about 4% each and the Tiv with about 3%.[152] The three big groups are closely associated with the initial three administrative regions of Nigeria (the North, the West and the East) and in the first federal election in 1959 each group established their own geographically rooted political party.[153] Throughout Nigeria´s history, political parties have been affiliated with the three main ethnic groups and smaller ethnic groups have often either been "swallowed" in election or affiliated with one the three main groups due to the first-past-the-poll electoral system.[154] As mentioned in previous chapter's section on ethnicity, the viability of an ethnic label as a political platform can decided how significant that ethnic label will be in political conflict. The Kanuris, the ethnic group most represented in the membership of Boko Haram,[155] is nationally a minority group, so if a political party began to specifically mobilize the Kanuri it would exclude other ethnic groups and the Kanuri can therefore not provide a viable electoral platform. A number of provisions have furthermore been inscribed in law to avoid ethnic mobilization. The provisions do not mean that ethnicity does not play a role in politics, but it does mean that political parties are required to be nationally representative and often build broader ethnic support bases.[156] The Kanuri ethnic identity has therefore not become a political identity as nationally significant as the three mayor ethnic groups, or the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda mentioned in the previous chapter. Instead the Kanuri, and many other smaller ethnic groups, were united with the Hausa/Fulani under a pan-Islam ideology of "One North, One People, Under One God" as the Northern People's Congress (NPC) expressed it. On a subnational level, and especially in the creation of states, smaller ethnic groups play a larger role, even creating new subethnic groups and opting in and out of one of the main ethnic groups when deemed beneficial.[157] The usual

[152] Cia Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (retrieved 10 Aug. 2015).
[153] Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*, (The Free Press, 2005):193-205.
[154] Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Nigeria since Independence: Crippled Giant*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
[155] Daniel Agbigboa. "The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram versus the State", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2:3 (2013):5.
[156] Matthijs Bogaards. "Ethnic party bans and institutional engineering in Nigeria", *Democratization* 17, no.4 (2010): 730-749.
[157] Andrew C. Okolie, "The Appropriation of Difference: State and the Construction of Ethnic Identities in Nigeria", *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research,* vol.3:1 (2009):67-92.

assumption that Nigeria is divided into a dichotic North-South therefore makes sense if the focus is national, the presidential election for example, but to understand the state-level dynamics it is inherent to look at the smaller ethnic groups. Nigeria follows the trend of ethnicity and political mobilization presented in the previous chapter, by the three most significant ethnic identities also being the three most viable political identities nationally and furthermore also being the ethnic label emphasized by the colonial administration.[158]

While the Kanuri ethnic group constitutes the majority of Boko Haram's membership, other ethnic groups are also represented.[159] Ethnic labels have caused internal divisions within Boko Haram,[160] but exact figures on the ethnic composition are unknown. As a cause of Boko Haram's insurgency it is therefore the absence of ethnic rhetoric that is interesting. By its absence it can be assumed that ethnicity is simply not a viable platform to base an insurgency on and instead Boko Haram has articulated a religious identity. The Islamic identity provides Boko Haram with broader reach, beyond the region inhabited by the Kanuri. A Muslim identity will add legitimacy to the group just as it has done for other groups, both violent and non-violent, with a legitimate identity label to compete for state resources. This aspect is explored in further detail in the section on religion (3.6). Islam provides Boko Haram with a legitimate foundation to enter the political competition from. Boko Haram does, in this sense, fit rather neatly with the general assumptions on ethnicity as a cause of insurgency in Africa.

[158] *Ibid.*
[159] Freedom Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the evolving Salafi Jihadist threat in Nigeria", (2014).
[160] Naija247News "Detained Boko Haram kingpin opens up •Reveals how sect operates •Says members can't defect for fear of assassination •Gunmen kill Islamic cleric in Zamfara", *Naija247News*, <http://naija247news.com/2012/02/detained-boko-haram-kingpin-opens-up-%E2%80%A2reveals-how-sect-operates-%E2%80%A2says-members-cant-defect-for-fear-of-assassination-%E2%80%A2gunmen-kill-islamic-cleric-in-zamfara/> (retrieved 29 July 2015);
Atta Barkindo, "Boko Haram: Ideology, Ethnicity and Identity", *Tony Blair Foundation*, 29 Sep 2014, <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/opinion/boko-haram-ideology-ethnicity-and-identity> (retrieved 29 Jul 2015).

3.5-The Nigerian State

Nigeria has always been a divided society. The main lines of division are ethnic, regional, and religious. Each of these have been significant for different issues, at different points in time, and on different levels (federal and state), sometimes overlapping and sometimes not. Different colonial educational polices implemented in the regions before independence meant that southerners dominated the colonial administration as civil servants and all institutions of higher learning. When the first joint legislative council meeting between the North and the South was held in 1947, the North had one university graduate, five newspapers and had only just begun to organize in political parties. The South had several hundred university graduates, 35 newspapers, and had contested in elections in both Calabar and Lagos since 1922. So while the North was numerically superior, they were underrepresented in the state bureaucracy and in general underprepared for independence. The existence of three states at independence each with their own dominate ethnic group, furthermore meant that smaller entities, political parties, religious, and ethnic groups would often be either "swallowed" by one of the larger entities by affiliation or plainly left out of decision making. [161] While each state could easily have formed their own country by numerical standards,[162] they were now pooled together in the constellation of Nigeria, where both federal and state contradictions with a potential for conflicts were abundant. Within a decade of independence the country had experienced two military led coups and a civil war that cost between 1 and 3 million lives, and turned additional 3 million into displaced persons.[163]

On a federal level, conflicts have revolved around federal revenue distributions, distribution of power between ethnic, regional and religious groups, and civil-military relations. With the introduction of democracy in 1999, the latter has been of little immediate concern but still lingers in the back of Nigeria's national consciousness. Revenue distribution is a contentious issue and approximately 75% of total government revenue is reliant on oil and gas,[164] which is located in just a few states. It can be argued that the majority of these challenges are founded in Nigeria's large size, which have caused endless refinements to the federation formula, including the creation of new states currently at 36 with a total of 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs), that presidential candidates must win at least 25% of the votes in two-thirds of states, all significant ethnic groups need to be represented in the civil service, and oil revenue is distributed by the federal government but the local government and states have significant autonomy over it allocation within the state budget. The latter factor has two significant consequences. The number of states and their

[161] E. E. Osaghae, *Nigeria since Independence: Crippled Giant*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998):1-30.
[162] Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the present*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009).
[163] M. Gould, *The Biafran War: The Struggle for modern Nigeria*, (I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd; 2013):8-38.
[164] Editorial Board, "The Nigeria Economy: Well Below Par" *The Economist,* 29 Nov2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21635051-over-reliance-oil-spells-trouble-nigeria-well-below-par> (retrieved 26 June 2015)

heavy reliance on the distribution, often without much federal oversight, of oil and gas revenue means that states no longer require economic viability. The further existence of approximately 350 ethnic groups and a tendency to create new sub-ethnic groups to advance specific interest results in a constant potential for a creation of states. The second consequence of decentralized oil and gas revenue is that corruption in the individual states has increased immensely.[165]

This section starts by identifying the specific weaknesses of the Nigerian state with significant relevance for Boko Haram, in particular the lack of a monopoly of violence. It secondly introduces the political behavior in Nigeria, more specifically the high level of corruption, violence and disregard for democratic principles often labeled godfatherism. It then introduces two specific events in recent Nigerian history that have impacted the weakness of the security sector, increased the political competition and increased the politico-religious competition. These two are democratization and the introduction of Sharia law across most of the northern states.

3.6.1-Nigeria: a Failed State?

It has been argued that Nigeria was a failed state,[166] but perhaps the country is currently better understood as a collapsing state[167] or a weak state with a potential for disintegration but also a potential to redeemed itself and move towards a higher level of stability with stronger institutions. One of the Nigerian state´s main weaknesses is closely linked to Boko Haram´s insurgency. The lack of a monopoly of violence and ineffective projection of power has left certain rural corners of Nigeria outside the state's jurisdiction.

Boko Haram initiated their insurgency in the northeastern states, where population density is the lowest in the country[168] and furthest from the capital.[169] The Nigerian police force is furthermore notoriously corrupt, brutal, and under-resourced, demonstrated by the ample examples of arbitrary killings, roadblocks established for bribes, requirements of bribes prior to investigation etc.[170] In the early 2000s, the Nigerian Taliban conducted hijra and were largely left alone, able to conduct military training in Yobe state. After the police's initial clampdown on the group in December 2003, the majority was killed but a significant number of the members escaped and rejoined Yusuf's group in Maiduguri. In 2004, it was possible for the group to

[165] M. Ottaway, J. Herbst and G.Mills, "Africa's big states: toward a new realism", (2004):1-8.
[166] Robert I. Rotberg. "The new nature of nation-state failure", *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2002):83-96.
[167] William Reno. "The Politics of Insurgency in Collapsing States", *Development and Changes* 33, no. 5 (2002):837-858.
[168] *MACOS Urban Management Consultants,* URL: <http://macosconsultancy.com/Lists%20of%20Nigerian%20State%20by%20Landmass%20and%20Population%20Densityyy.html> (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015).
[169] National Bureau of Statistics, *Annual Abstract of statistics, 2010* (2010)
[170] Human Rights Watch, *"Everyone's in on the Game" Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigerian Police Force* (New York: Human Rights Watch,2010);Human Rights Watch, *Arbitrary Killings by Security Forces* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009).

kidnap and execute several policemen without being caught.[171] After the Maiduguri crackdown by security forces in July 2009 the surviving members of the group were able to escape and hide not just in Nigeria, but also beyond the border in Cameroon.[172] Even though Yusuf was arrested and held in police custody on at least three occasions, he was always released on bail eventually.[173] That a large number of Boko Haram members have been arrested on numerous occasions only to be released, points to a general climate of impunity caused by bad policing and an inadequate judiciary. In this sense it is not a case of Boko Haram's excellent ability to operate without being caught by facilitating the vast and sparsely populated North East to their advantages, but a case of a well-known group's members facing arrests and still being able to carry on their mission.[174] Large numbers of in-depth news articles are publicly available at this point indicating that information about the group is available, further highlighting the weakness of the security forces.[175]

It is not just the security forces' inertia that illustrates their inadequacy but also their harshness. The December 2003 siege of the group's compound in Kanamma ended with the death of most of the participants in hijra, and the July 2009 clashes between security forces and the group in the streets of capital cities of the North East left more than 800 casualties (civilians, police and members included).[176] Responses to the group by the government have either been close to absent or too harsh, killing and injuring innocent people in the process. As the full scale insurgency began in mid-2010 the branches of the security sector mostly concerned with the insurgency, police, military, and the civilian Joint Task Force (JTF), have all applied exceedingly heavy-handed methods increasing the death tolls by thousands over the years.[177] When the security forces did not apply harsh methods, they were inadequately equipped to carry the task, often running out of ammunition, deployed without ammunition altogether, or plainly overrun by Boko Haram.[178]

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[171] M. Reinert & L. Garçon "Boko Haram:a A chronology",(2014).
[172] S. Elden, "The geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigeria's 'war on terror'", (2014):414–425.
[173] J. Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram And Its Muslim Critics: Observations From Yobe State", (2014):33-62.
[174] BBC News, "Nigeria police hunt 'Taleban'", *BBC News*, 22 Sep. 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3679092.stm> retrieved 1 Oct. 2015.
[175] See for example: Abdullahi Bego," 'Taliban' of Nigeria: Who Are They?", *Weekly Trust (Kaduna)*, 3 Jan. 2004, <http://www.nigeriamasterweb.com/TalibanOfNigeria.html> (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015); Emmanuel Goujon & Aminu Abubakar, "Nigeria's 'Taliban' plot comeback from hide-outs", *Mail and Guardian*, 11 Jan. 2006, <http://mg.co.za/article/2006-01-11-nigerias-taliban-plot-comeback-from-hideouts> (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015); IRIN News "NIGERIA: Muslim fundamentalist uprising raises fears of terrorism", *IRIN News*, 25 Jan. 2004, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/48247/nigeria-muslim-fundamentalist-uprising-raises-fears-of-terrorism> (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015); Darren Kew, "Why Nigeria Matters", *First Thing*, Nov. 2007, <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2007/11/002-why-nigeria-matters> retrieved 1 Oct. 2015); BBC, "Nigeria police hunt 'Taliban'", *BBC*, 22 Sep. 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3679092.stm> (retrieved 1 Oct. 2015).
[176] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence*, (London: Amnesty International, 2012).
[177] See: *ibid.*; Human Rights Watch, *Arbitrary Killings by Security Forces*, (New York: Human Rights Watch ,2009); Human Rights Watch, *"Everyone's in on the Game": Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2010);Human Rights Watch, *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Forces Abuses in Nigeria*, (New York: *Human Rights Watch,* 2012).
[178] Human Rights Watch, *Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp": Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria*, (New York: Human Rights Watch,2014).

The North East borders Niger, Cameroon and Chad. These borders are porous with long stretches of uncontrolled areas making border crossing of people, contraband, and vehicles relatively easy and often unseen.[179] As pointed out by Pérouse de Montclos weapons have been widely available in the region around Lake Chad since the end of Chad's civil war in the 1980s.[180] The under-capacitated security forces are thereby unable to protect and patrol the country's borders.

The northern eastern corner of Nigeria is desert-like, vast and sparsely populated, where groups can act with a high level of impunity, the local population has little incentive to cooperate with a violent and corrupt police force, insurgents can escape across the porous borders, and weapons and skilled manpower is easily obtainable. All of these factors point towards multiple inadequacies of the security forces and the lack of the state's monopoly of violence, which has created pockets of ungoverned territory. While it might be tempting to understand this as Abuja's neglect and disregard for a far-off distant corner of its territory, the government is trying to bring the area under its control by most means at its disposal, as demonstrated by the troop deployment in the region, it simply cannot.[181]

The inability to provide security to the population is not Nigeria's only failure as a state and as pointed out by Hill, Nigeria fails to provide sufficient educational services and health care, especially in the rural areas.[182] The observations made above are very much in line with the literature on the state as a cause of insurgency in Africa, by the trend of security forces to either provoke insurgency by harsh responses or enable insurgency by allowing for impunity. Interestingly, the fight between Boko Haram and the Nigerian state follows Herbst's general assumptions on COIN in Africa. Intelligence services with limited capacity fail to act adequately when faced with an infant insurgency. This has little to do with geographical size as even small states face this issue and when an insurgency matures, the military loses their initial advantages of pure force because the conflict will be fought by unconventional means. The latter point is multiplied if the African state is geographically big in which case the state already has huge budgetary commitments, does not receive a lot of donor aid, and can therefore not free funds to sustain an effective COIN campaign across large portions of its territory. The military´s initial advantages are furthermore lost as it becomes difficult to recruit troops to fight against a full-scale insurgency.[183]

[179] Jacob Zenn , Atta Barkindo & Nicholas A Heras, "The Ideological Evolution of Boko Haram in Nigeria", *The RUSI Journal*, 158:4, (2013):46-53.
[180] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis", *Chatham House Research Paper,* (2014).
[181] J.N.C Hill, *Nigeria since Independence: Forever Fragile?* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2012).
[182] *Ibid.*
[183] J. Herbst, "Conflict in Africa: armies, rebels and geography", (2006).

3.6.2-Political Behavior

Nigeria did not collapse or disintegrate to the same extent as Sierra Leone, Liberia, the DRC or Somalia. Instead the neopatrimonial system of power bargaining mutated into a political logic associated with high levels of corruption, violence and intimidation often labelled *prebendalism* or *godfatherism*. Prebendalism is the appropriation of state offices for private accumulation of wealth for self and for distribution to a network of patronage,[184] but godfatherism deserves a more in-depth description. The Nigerian state has been used as a tool by civilians and military political elites for self-enrichment and to sustain patronage networks. Rooted in the colonial period, perfected in the immediate post-independence period, and extended under various military governments, the system has been effective in enriching a selective number of people, often the ones holding public office.[185] After democratization in 1999, political competition began to revolve around elections, but as elected officials are usually restricted to serving two terms, the main beneficiaries are often behind the scenes. These, mostly men, have been called godfathers, big men, political kingmakers, *Maigida* (master of the house) in Hausa or *Baba Kekere* (the small great father) in Yoruba. They engage in intense and extensive political competition to install their 'godson' in public office and get their share of the state coffers.[186]

Political parties are better understood as election platforms from where the godfathers run their candidates, rather than political parties in a more conventional sense with coherent agendas and ideologies. Candidates therefore tend to exchange one party for another at their convenience. The level of prebendalism makes control over public office an extremely lucrative business, but it also involves a high risk when the relationship between the godfather and godson grows sour.[187] The godfathers install a politician in office, who could not have won by his own means, and expect financial rewards via government contracts, control over office appointments, blatant money transfers from the state coffers to private bank accounts etc. in return. The politician in office becomes a stooge of the godfather, who rarely has interest in running for office himself, or are not allowed to under the two term provision. Former Oyo State governor Victor Olunloyo commented that in the Nigerian political system: "Money flows up and down…these honorable

[184] E. E. Osaghae, *Nigeria since Independence: Crippled Giant*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 1998): 311.
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] Attah Amana Philip, Audu Joel Samson & Haruna Paul Ogwu, "Godfatherism, Party Politics and Democracy" in Nigeria: Issues And Challenges", *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa (JGGSDA)*, 4:2, (2014):86-93.
[187] Ebenezer Obadare & Wale Adebanwi "Introduction: democracy and prebendalism: emphases, provocations, and elongations", in Wale Adebanwi & Ebenezer Obadare (eds.), *Democracy and prebendalism in Nigeria*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillam, 2013).

members [of the Oyo State House of Assembly], during the election period, they want the patronage of the puppeteer. Afterwards money will flow in the opposite direction—back from the puppet to the puppeteer."[188]

The habitual godfather strategy is to constantly increase the godson's debt by ensuring time in office, but as the godfather is often in control of political gangs he can also unleash violence when threatened. One such godfather is Lamidi Adedibu, who rose to power because he controlled the Oyo state chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). His godson Rashidi Ladojal was installed as Oyo State governor in 2003, but he quickly refused to pay the demanded kickbacks. In 2005 this resulted in knife stabbings in the state house of assembly followed by guns fights in the streets of Ibadan, and eventually Ladojal was removed from office. Godfatherism spread throughout Nigeria[189] and had come about due to high state dependence on re-distribution of oil income, the peripheral influence of state politics in federal politics, the lack of accountability, and the lack of alternative sources of income. Altogether it has created a system where violence, corruption, and rigged elections orchestrated by godfathers persevere[190] and where the general public is excluded from political goods in favor of the elite.

3.6.3-Godfatherism, Gubernatorial and Boko Haram

One of Nigeria's most notorious godfathers is former Borno State Governor Ali Modu Sheriff and his rise to state governor was closely linked to Boko Haram's insurgency. Modu Sheriff was wealthy and influential member of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). He became the godfather of Mallam Kachlallah during the Borno State 1999 gubernatorial election. Kachlallah won the Borno State governorship and Modu Sheriff won a seat in the national senate and became the ANPP's senate leader, significantly increasing his influence in the party. Immediately after Kachlallah's electoral victory he refused Modu Sheriff's demands of control of office appointments and allocation of state funds. But Kachlallah was not Modu Sheriff's only godson in the Borno State Assembly, and he soon faced significant resistance from Modu sheriff's other clients. Both Modu Sheriff and Kachlallah established Ecomog gangs,[191] political thugs, which intensified and escalated

[188] Cited in Human Rights Watch, *Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria*, (Human Rights, 2007).
[189] See for example: Human Rights Watch, *Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria*, (2007).
; Adeline Nnenna Idike, " Reinforcing Democracy In Nigeria", *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*, 4:3(2014):77-86.
[190] Chris Albin-Lackey, "The Origins and meaning of Nigeria's 'godfatherism' phenomenon", in Daniel C. Bach & Mamoudou Gazigbo (eds.), *Neopatrimonialism in Africa and Beyond*, (Routledge, London and New York; 2012):132-141.
[191] Named after the The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group(ECOMOG).

the violence in Borno. The whole episode ended in the impeachment of Kachlallah and Modu Sheriff taking over the state governorship.[192]

Modu Sheriff sponsored an Ecomog group during the 2003 gubernatorial election and this is one of the initial Boko Haram groups. Modu Sheriff agreed to an implementation of Sharia in Borno closer to the interpretation of Mohammed Yusuf in exchange for Yusuf's group´s aid. There is consensus on the initial cooperation between Modu Sheriff and Yusuf, but the circumstances around the fall out between the two are debatable. By one account, their cooperation was short lived as Modu Sheriff cut ties to Yusuf after winning the election and becoming Borno state governor in 2003, once Yusuf had served his purpose.[193] The use of political thugs to unleash violence and intimidate voters is common political practice in Nigeria. What seems to be the difference in the case of Boko Haram is Modu Sheriff's underestimation of the popularity and capacity of Yusuf and his followers. By other accounts, Modu Sheriff continued to sponsor the group after the 2003 gubernatorial election.[194] As with many factors in the intricate political scene in Nigeria it is difficult to verify what actually happened and continues to happen, but Modu Sheriff was arrested in Cameroon in 2012 due to his involvement with the group and he was only released after pressure from Cameroonian government officials.[195]

One of Modu Sheriff's claims to innocence is based on Boko Haram killing his brother and cousin and that he has personally been a targeted by the group. While the death of his family members is verified, all family members who were killed were also politicians, making it hard to estimate the reason for the murders.[196] However, the group has sworn vengeance on the state governor based on his backtracking on stricter state implementation of Sharia and due to his involvement in the extra-judicial execution of Yusuf in July 2009. Modu Sheriff's relationship with Yusuf manifested in his appointment of Buju Foi as state commissioner of religious affairs in 2007. Foi was a well-known follower of Yusuf when he was appointed[197] but was later killed together with Yusuf's brother-in-law Baa Mohammed in the July clashes between authorities and the

[192] Isaac Olawale Albert, "Explaining 'godfatherism ' in Nigerian Politics", *African Sociological Review*, 9:2 (2005):79-105; Lambert Uyi Edigin, "Political Conflicts and Godfatherism in Nigeria: A Focus on the Fourth Republic", *African Research Review*, 4:4 (2010):174-186.
[193] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis", (2014).
[194]NewsRescueCom, "Modu Sheriff, SAS, Gen. Ihejirika Are Boko Haram Sponsors – Australian Negotiator Stephen Davis", 28 August 2014, *NewsRescueCom*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2QnEiE9CH8> (retrieved 15 June 2015).
[195]Premium Times, "EXCLUSIVE: Secret Intelligence Report links ex-Governor Sheriff, Chad President to Boko Haram sponsorship", *Premium Times,* 12 Sept. 2014, <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/168053-exclusive-secret-intelligence-report-links-ex-governor-sheriff-chad-president-to-boko-haram-sponsorship.html> (retrieved 15 June 2015).
[196] Sahara Reporters," ANPP Governorship Candidate, Brother Of Governor, Among Six Shot Dead In Borno", *Sahara Reporters*, 28 Jan. 2011, <http://saharareporters.com/2011/01/28/anpp-governorship-candidate-brother-governor-among-six-shot-dead-borno> (retrieved 15 June 2015).
[197] D. E. Agbigboa "Peace at Daggers Drawn? Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria", (2014):41-67.

group.[198] It is well-known that Yusuf began to speak out against Modu Sheriff in early 2009, accusing him of *taghut*, referring to anything un-Islamic.[199]

The patronage relationship between Modu Sheriff and Yusuf helps to explain the geographical location of Boko Haram´s first compound in Maiduguri and why the group could operate very freely in the initial stages. It furthermore underlines how youth groups at a mosque can be mobilized to violence and intimidation by elites with political ambitions. More important for the academic debate is the dynamics of highly personalized politics where individuals have a huge impact on allocations of funds to various groups.

3.6.5- Democratization

The most important event in Nigeria's recent history is the transition from military rule to democracy in 1999. The Nigerian Armed Forces' interventions have interrupted previous periods of democracy but the current period, the Fourth Republic, is now the longest consecutive democratic period. Muhammadu Buhari´s 2015 presidential victory furthermore marks the first win by an oppositional candidate. While the relatively peaceful handover of power from former President Jonathan Goodluck's party, The People's Democratic Party (PDP), to Buhari's All Progressive Congress (APC) indicates some level of democratic consolidation, the debate on democracy´s benefits for the population is ongoing. The democratic dispensation has had significant consequences. First is the increase of political competition via election. Secondly, is the lack of a monopoly on violence, this point is further explored in relation to democratization below, and thirdly is the need for politicians to garner popularity. Candidates for state governor in the North have done so by promising implementation of Sharia law to curb the rampant corruption.

3.6.5.1-Democratization and Nigeria's Weak Security Sector

The existence of Boko Haram and the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) demonstrate the inability of the democratic Nigerian state to provide security from internal threats. That is, the Nigerian state lacks a monopoly on violence within its territory. Hill suggests that this can either be explained by the lack of civilian control over the armed forces following the transition from military rule to democracy or by the general deterioration of the armed forces' capacity.[200] A number of initiatives have been made to ensure civilian control and the non-interference of military into civilian politics, including retirement of all military officers who held political office during the military rule years, continuous reorganizations,

[198] O. Osumah, "Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria and the vicious cycle of internal insecurity", (2013):536-660.
[199] J. Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram And Its Muslim Critics: Observations From Yobe State",(2014):33-62.
[200] J.N.C Hill, *Nigeria since Independence: Forever Fragile?*, (Palgrave Macmillan: 2012).

and general demilitarization.[201] Despite, or perhaps because of, these initiatives, a 2008 evaluation of the security sector stated that the most crucial weakness of the sector is the security-decision making, and the most important weakness of the security-decision making is its ad-hoc nature: "It is not shaped by any coherent national security strategy".[202] The lack of a White Paper establishing Nigeria's security priorities are echoed in the budgetary process, which during the last decade of military rule was marked by the absence of due process and allocation of funds according to needs. While the general governmental budgetary process has re-established some of its legitimacy under the democratic dispensation, the civilian-led Ministry of Defence has very little control over military expenditures which are effectively controlled by the service commanders within the three divisions of the Nigerian Armed Forces: the army, the navy and the air force.[203]

Hill´s second concern, that the military capacity of Nigeria has deteriorated, is substantiated by a report from 2000 stating that 75% of the Nigerian Army´s equipment was not operational.[204] According to Bates, military leaders faced with democratization and democratically elected leaders will tap into the state coffers due to their limited time in office. The behaviour of both will weaken general state capacity including the security sector.[205] The assumptions is supported in SIPRI data as there was a significant increase in military spending leading up to the introduction of democracy in 1999, followed by the relative stability of the military budget until an increased occurred in 2008[206], coinciding with Boko Haram initiating their insurgency. The weakness of the Armed Forces is amplified by the lack of a coherent strategy, due budgetary process, and civilian control. Hill´s two concerns are therefore not mutually exclusive and are both a consequence of Nigeria´s long periods of military rule and the democratization process, which has led to specific enclaves of the Nigerian territory being ungoverned.

The impact of democratization on the armed forces has been severe and their weaknesses have in return been one of the major causes of Boko Haram's insurgency. It is therefore interesting that the nexus between democratization and security as a cause of Boko Haram's insurgency is non-existent in the literature on causes of Boko Haram's insurgency.

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[201] Emmanuel O. Ojo, "Taming the Monster: Demilitarization and Democratization in Nigeria", *Armed Forces and Society,* vol.32:2(2006):254-272; William Ehwarieme,"The Military Factor in Nigeria's Democratic Stability, 1999-2009", *Armed Forces and Society,* vol.37:3 (2011):494-511.
[202] Okechukwu Ibeanu & Abubakar Momoh,"State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making: Nigeria Country Study", *Conflict, Security & Development Group Papers,* no.14 (2008):68.
[203] Wuyi Omitoogun & Tunde Odutan, "Nigeria", in Wuyi Omitoogun and Eboe Hutchful (eds.), *Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa: The Processes and Mechanisms of Control* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2006):154-179.
[204] Douglas Farah, "U.S. to Help Nigeria Revamp Its Armed Forces", *Washington Post*, 29 April 2000, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/04/29/us-to-help-nigeria-revamp-its-armed-forces/eab2413a-3264-4812-8375-ca1c54fa6d29/> (retrieved 5 Oct 2015).
[205] R. Bates, "Political Conflict and State Failure", (2007).
[206] SIPRI, (2015), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database,* http://milexdata.sipri.org

3.6.4.2-Democratization and the Introduction of Sharia Law in Nigeria

Following the re-introduction of democracy in 1999, northern state governor candidates increased their popularity in the election by promising implementation of Sharia law in criminal law, and by the end of 2002 twelve northern states had incorporated some elements of Sharia into their criminal code. Whereas Sharia implementation was being presented to the public as a tool to curb rampant corruption, it was more so a political tool for state governors to affiliate closer with religious organizations, and increase their public support base. Legislation was rushed and contradictory, and insufficient time had gone into capacity building of lawyers, judges, and police, all making the actual implementation come across very insincere. This is perpetuated by the general level of corruption in the Nigerian judiciary, the wealth of arbitrary sentences passed, and the targeting of poor people.[207]

In Garza's study of Sharia Law in the Kano state, he found that virtually no Islamic organizations, ranging from conservative brotherhoods to radical Shiites, were opposed to the initial implementation.[208] It's important to note that the more radical element of the Islamic community challenged the established Islamic orders' authority to provide guidance in the Sharia courts by pointing to scripture. The continuous call for closer adherence to scripture, means that organizations are competing with each other for who were would be deemed closer to a *real* Islam. Religious authenticity became a political issue and both religiously and politically it became impossible to argue against Sharia implementation. The largest discussion for the Islamic community was however not of scripture, but who should pass judgements and who should enforce Sharia.[209] Police in Nigeria is Federal but Sharia law is state specific, so Sharia states ended up using hisba groups as law enforcers. Hisba groups can be understood as small groups, often formed by youth groups associated with a specific mosque. These groups were tasked with enforcing Sharia law by either handing over suspects to the Sharia courts or by delivering immediate punishment.[210] Being able to act with a high degree of impunity is effectively providing the hisba groups a significant amount of power to exercise their own interpretation of Sharia and to carry out personal acts of revenge. Sharia is particularly interesting for Boko Haram, as the group was initially one of the hisba groups and because Modu Sheriff promised stricter Sharia implementation in Borno State in exchange for support from the group.[211] After being elected, Sheriff created a state ministry of religious affairs and put a close confidante of Yusuf in charge of it[212] but like most

[207] Human Rights Watch, *"Political Shari'a"? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria,* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003).
[208] Tahir Haliru Gwarzo, "Activities of Islamic Civic Associations in the Northwest of Nigeria: With Particular Reference to Kano State", *Africa Spectrum*, 38:3 (2003):289-318.
[209] J. Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State", (2014):33-62.
[210] Human Rights Watch, *"Political Shari'a"? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria,* (2003).
[211] International Crisis Group, "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency" (2014).
[212] F. Onuoha, "Boko Haram And The Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat In Nigeria", (2014).

other state governors promising stricter sharia, Modu Sheriff did not care much about divine justice after being elected.[213]

Apart from the frustration caused by Modu Sheriff's backtracking on implementation, the failure of the Sharia already implemented was also a cause of concern. Any arrests made by the hisba groups can be overruled by the state police, and both the federal government court and the individual states' chief justice administrator is allowed to dismiss Sharia judgements.[214] Hisba groups were furthermore often used as tools by the state governor to intimidate political opposition and they only arrested the poorest segment of the population. The Sharia implementation caused conflict between various Islamic groups, as leaders would agree to integrate into the court system as a way to gain political power and receive economic benefits.[215] As Yusuf's group was eventually excluded from the Sharia courts, it lost significant political influence. The issues of Sharia implementation should therefore be understood as intensifying the political competition between the different Islamic groups in the north.

While the introduction of Sharia is exclusive to northern Nigeria, the use of parallel law enforcement bodies is not. The Bakassi Boys, the MASSOB and the OPC were hired by various state governors to enforce laws, or to act as the state governors' private militia, by extra-judicial means including cutting off hands and arms. They were furthermore used as muscle in fights between politicians. Like the hisba groups, these were wrapped in anti-corruption rhetoric but used for political intimidation.[216]

Implementation of Sharia has on many occasions been used as tool for curbing corruption, rhetorically, and it was often enforced by the hisba groups linked to local mosques. For religious and political leaders Sharia implementation is a way to achieve secular ends by religious means. The decentralized structure of Islam allows for this and combined with Nigerian politics, it can often turn violent.

3.6.5- Findings: The Nigerian State as Cause for Boko Haram's Insurgency

The overriding theme in Nigeria's recent history is democratization. In the academic literature on the state as a cause of insurgency, democratization has two sides. Firstly, rulers faced with democratization will increasingly use the state's institutions for accumulation of wealth as they are faced with a time restriction on access to the state, and that democratic leaders will behave in the same way due to the potential defeat in election. This behavior causes state weakness. Secondly, democratization increases political competition in

[213] J. Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram And Its Muslim Critics: Observations From Yobe State", (2014).
[214] Paul M. Lubeck, "Nigeria: Mapping the Shari`a Restorationist Movement" in Robert Hefner (ed.), *Shari`a Politics: Islamic Law and Society in the Modern World*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011):244-279.
[215] Johannes Harnischfeger, *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria,* (Frankfurth/New York: Campus Verlag, 2008).
[216] W. Reno. "The Politics of Insurgency in Collapsing States", (2002):837-858.

general, especially in the period leading up to elections. Both consequences of democratization are experienced in Nigeria.

3.6.5.1-State Weakness

The Nigerian state's institutions are weak because of the continuous plunder of its coffers, especially in the decade leading up to the introduction of democracy in 1999 but also during the democratic period. This have effectively caused weakness of the Nigerian Armed Forces and the police service, the two main institutions tasked with preventing a potential insurgency from escalating and with defeating an occurring insurgency.

Plundering of the state's institutions is not the only factor causing weakness of Nigeria's security sector. The lack of civilian control over the armed forces and the lack of a coherent strategy further deepen the institutional weakness. This is the reverberations of decades of military rule, where rulers were neither financially nor politically accountable.

Nigeria's weak security sector has allowed for Boko Haram to emerge within a geographical enclave of little or no government provided security. It was initially the inability of the police force to act accordingly towards a brewing insurgency, which provided opportunity for Boko Haram to train, recruit and execute small scale attacks. When the police responded to the small insurgency, its actions were so harsh that it provoked Boko Haram to stockpile arms and await another attack. This attack came in July 2009, and in Maiduguri alone it left more than 800 Boko Haram members and civilians dead. Facilitating the uncontrolled borders to escape the country and the little presence of police in the immediate region surrounding Maiduguri, Boko Haram was able to reorganize and initiate a full scale insurgency a year later. The low capacity of Nigeria armed forces meant that they were able to do so and even grow throughout the process. Government presence exists on a spectrum and while Boko Haram's environment is not ungoverned to the extent of the Kivus in the DRC, it still provides a low enough presence of security to allow for insurgencies to develop.

3.6.5.2-Political Competition

Prebendalism is prevalent in Nigeria, but godfathers have effectively found a way to circumvent the time constraint on access to state resources associated with democracy. By placing a stooge, or godson, in public office, they are still able to appropriate the state's wealth for private accumulation. Godfatherism is a consequence of the intensified political competition which followed the democratic dispensation. Modu Sheriff is a good example of a godfather who applied violence through his political thugs, the initial Boko Haram group, to obtain his political and financial goals. The huge of amount of oil revenue distributed by the federal government to the states without much oversight have increased the stakes by making access to state

funds more lucrative. This has in returned multiplied the level of intensity of the political competition. The literature on causes of insurgency in Africa does not include this innovative method of appropriating state funds, and the initial development of Boko Haram illustrates the link between democratization, violent and intense political competition, and insurgency.

Another factor of democratization is Sharia implementation. The debate on Sharia implementation has been a constant throughout Nigeria's history, but it was not until the introduction of democracy in 1999 that civilian politicians could facilitate Sharia's popularity to win elections. Modu Sheriff promised stricter Sharia implementation to the initial Boko Haram group, the hisba group, and he could in return use the group as political thugs, or *parochial rebels* as labeled by Reno.[217] The violence and intimidation provided by Boko Haram helped Modu Sheriff to win the election. Activation of religious instruments, Sharia, for political ends explains why Boko Haram developed from a Hisba group following democratization. But groups of political thugs exist throughout Nigeria based on from different organizations: labor unions, youth wings of political parties etc.[218] and it is essentially the violent, highly personalized and deeply corrupt nature of Nigerian politics that causes such groups to emerge. Sharia implementation instead provided an entry for religious group into politics. Democratization in the Nigeria did not alone increased competition between more conventional political entities (political parties, unions etc.) but also expanded the political competition to include religious organization. Nigeria therefore provides a good example of democratization's impact in country where religion and politics are deeply intertwined. This is explored further in the following section.

[217] W. Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa: New Approaches to African History,* (2011).
[218] *Ibid.*

3.6-Religion

In Nigeria it is not only politicians, political parties and the military, who played a significant role in shaping the current political dynamics, the various religious communities and organizations have interacted with the political arena throughout Nigeria's history, at times very blatantly and other times subtly. In the North it is specifically the Islamic organizations, which have been in conflict with each other. Nigeria is a microcosm of the religious composition of the rest of Africa, as roughly 50% are Muslim, 40% are Christian and 10% adheres to traditional African religions.[219] The southern parts are largely Christian, the northern are largely Muslim, and African Traditional Religions are usually practiced syncretic, in particular in the middle belt. But just as the ethnic landscape is not binary neither is the religious and many small enclaves of Muslims exist in the south as well as Christian enclaves in the north. Neither Islam nor Christianity are uniform categories and a wealth of different Christian and Muslim denominations exist.[220] John Campbell, the former US ambassador to Nigeria and author on Nigeria,[221] points out that Islam in the north is often practiced differently than in the South. Islam in the South is a choice and families can consist of both Muslims and Christians. They will usually celebrate each other's holidays and in general have a relaxed relationship to the choice of religion. In the North, what Campbell calls *emirate Islam* is practiced, meaning an Islam deeply embedded in sociopolitical patterns and tied to political institutions. Islam is not an individual choice but a religion you are born into and apostasy is almost unthinkable.[222] "Emirate Islam" is entrenched in the history of Islam in the North. Islamic empires and caliphates existed far before the British colonial administration's designation of the region as the Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1900, and the colonial administration relied heavily on the caliphates even after Lord Frederick Lugard became governor and established the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria by merging the North and the South in 1914.[223] Islamic institutions have a long history of political administration in the north, and their various conflicts are an important feature of the political environment in Nigeria.

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[219] The World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (retrieved 16 July 2015,)
[220] A. Alao, "Islamic radicalisation and violent extremism in Nigeria,"(2013):127-147
[221] See *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink,* (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011).
[222] John Campbell, "Five Questions on...Religion in Nigeria", *Tony Blair Faith Foundation*, 8 July 2014,<http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/backgrounder/five-questions-onreligion-nigeria> (retrieved 1 Aug. 2015)
[223] Roman Loimeier, "Islamic Reform and Political Change: The Example of Abubakar Gumi and the 'Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria", in: David Westerlund (ed.), *African Islam and Islam in Africa. Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers Ltd, 1997):286-307.

3.5.1-Boko Haram and Salafism

Even though Boko Haram has not openly adhered to Salafism, their rhetoric and some of their behavior are closely linked to this branch of Islam. Rhetorically, Mohammed Yusuf proscribed what has been labeled as ultra-Salafism and his sermons were widely available via audio cassettes, videos and books distributed throughout the region, and his sermons were well attended.[224] One of the more concrete linkages between Boko Haram and Salafism is the name of their first mosque in Maiduguri, the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque. Taymiyyah lived in Damascus in 14th century during the Mongolian invasion and is associated with Salafism due to his call for a more literal interpretation of Islam and his occupation with external Jihad.[225] By 'Salafi' having a connotation of Islamic authenticity and legitimacy, most Muslims will to some extent identify as a Salafi but not with the organizations often labeled Salafist by the west. It is therefore important to underline that Salafism is not an undebated term understood equivalently by all Muslims but more so a term used mostly by Western scholars to frame specific groups. The main tenet of Salafism is authenticity: Islam should be practiced like the followers closest to the Prophet. This is achieved by literal and strict interpretation of the religious texts, and a rejection of everything *bid'a*, religious innovation, and *taghut,* idolatry. Bid'a can refer to manmade logic or western logic, and other Islamic denominations especially the more mystically inclined Sufi brotherhood. Taghut is the theological reason for Ansar Dine's destruction of shrines in Timbuktu[226] and behind Taliban's bombing of the Buddha of Bamiyaan in Afghanistan.[227] This logic is evident in Yusuf's interview with the BBC: "Like rain. We believe it is a creation of God rather than an evaporation caused by the sun that condenses and becomes rain.," or in him saying that "like saying the world is a sphere. If it runs contrary to the teachings of Allah, we reject it. We also reject the theory of Darwinism."[228] And while the group itself has adopted numerous names, it was this kind of logic that made the neighbors of the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque in Maiduguri name Yusuf's group Boko Haram,[229] or as often translated from Hausa to English: 'Western education is forbidden.'[230]

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[224] Anonymous, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram", (2012):118-144.
[225] Terje Østebø, *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia*, (Boston: Brill, Leiden, 2012).
[226] Pascal Fletcher, "Timbuktu tomb destroyers pulverise Islam's history", *Reuters*, 3 July 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/03/uk-mali-crisis-timbuktu-idUSLNE86202G20120703> (retrieved 17 July 2015).
[227] Ahmed Rashid, "After 1,700 years, Buddhas fall to Taliban dynamite", *The Telegraph*, 12 March 2001, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1326063/After-1700-years-Buddhas-fall-to-Taliban-dynamite.html> (retrieved 17 July 2015).
[228] Joe Boyle, "Nigeria's 'Taliban' enigma", *BBC,* 31 July 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8172270.stm> (retrieved 20 July 2015).
[229] A. Walker "What is Boko Haram", (2012):1-16.
[230] A. Bigaglia, "Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust: Reflections on The Genesis of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria", (2012):35-44.

3.5.2-Salafism and the Islamic Community in Northern Nigeria

Violent and non-violent Salafis have existed in Nigeria since independence, so it is important to note that these groups are largely in doctrinal agreement but strategic disagreement. Some groups are purist, who do not interact with politics but are strictly concerned with theological questions. Other can be described as politico and they interact non-violently with the political arena in order to change society according to Salafist doctrine. The last group is the jihadists who adopt a violent strategy in order to submerge society in the doctrine of Salafism.[231] Boko Haram falls into the latter category. They are occupied with *Takfirism*. Takfir is an un-Islamic individual and therefore a legitimate target. For Boko Haram, everybody who do not adhere to their strict interpretation of Islam is takfir and can be killed legitimately. Takfirism furthermore call on its followers to go on hijra, implying settlement in isolated societies from where *kafirs*, infidels, should be fought.[232] Mohammed Alli's hijra to Kanamma in 2001 followed this idea and so does Boko Haram's Islamic state in the Sambisa Forest in 2014. The attacks on civilians not adhering to the strict, and selective, interpretation of Salafism are also to some degree legitimized by the occupation with bid'a and Takfirism. While it is important to acknowledge these dynamics, neither Salafism nor Takfirism is the dominate cause of Boko Haram's insurgency but its inherent logic is in constant confrontation with the lived reality of Nigerians.

3.5.3-Boko Haram and the Islamic Community

Northern Nigeria has experienced significant struggles between various Islamic organizations, and between Islamic organizations and the political rulers. Religious scholar Abubakar Gumi use Salafism as a nationalist or regionalist rallying cry for independence, and he can largely be credited for Salafism popularity in northern Nigeria. He established *Jama 'atu Izalat al-Bid'a wa Iqamat al-Sunna*, Society of Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna, (Yan Izala) in 1978. Yan Izala became a vehicle for political organization and mobilization for political conscious people, attracting young middle-class professionals with modern education as Salafism was a form of rebellion against the failed establishment based on Western ideas.[233] Uncontrolled urbanization, the materialism accompanying the 1970s oil boom, government corruption, and high unemployment of especially students from the *madrasa* allowed for all religious organizations to promulgate their alternative to the current political system. Christian sects, Sufis, Sunnis and

[231] Q. Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", (2006):207-239.
[232] F. Onuoha. "Boko Haram And The Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat In Nigeria", (2014).
[233] David Westerlund. "Reaction and Action: Accounting for the Rise of Islamism", in David Westerlund and Eva E. Rosander (eds.), *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists,* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, Athens, 1997): 308-333; Ben Amara, "Shaykh Ismaila Idris (1937-2000), the Founder of the Izala movement in Nigeria", *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 11 (2012):74-78.

following the 1979 Iranian revolution also Shias, were all present in the congested religious environment in northern Nigeria.[234]

The lack of job opportunity, the highly decentralized hierarchy, corruption charges against the leadership, the death of Gumi in 1992, and a blackened public reputation caused factionalism.[235] By early 1990s Alhus Sunna was formed in Maiduguri and Shayk Ja'far Mahmoud Adam was one of its leaders.[236] Mohammed Yusuf was a representative of Ahlus Sunna in Maiduguri around 2000. Like Ja'far Mahmoud, Yusuf can at this time be labeled a politico Salafist as they are non-violently engaged in the political arena. Ja'far Mahmoud was however more tolerant of cooperation with government whereas Yusuf soon began to preach complete disregard for government, including a prohibition on government employment for members and a stricter implementation of Sharia. His radical preaching and anti-government stance brought him into disdain amongst the leadership of Ahlus Sunna so he established his own mosque, the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque, and accompanying compound. Ja'far Mahmoud accused Yusuf and his followers for being *Kharijites*, the first Islamic group to display violent extremist behavior,[237] and Yusuf accused Ja'far Mahmoud of being a stooge of the government and *ulama* of the West. It is however not until Ja'far Mahmoud and Mohamed Yusuf disagreed over funding from the London-based al-Muntada aid organizations, that Ja'far Mahmoud is assassinated outside his Kano mosque in 2007.[238] In Brigaglia's opinion, Ja'far Mahmoud was both aware of the funding and the military training camps in Nigeria, but was under the impression that the recruits would leave Nigeria to fight in a legitimate jihad elsewhere.[239]

3.5.6-Findings: Religion as a Cause of Boko Haram's Insurgency

Reaching secular and political ends by religious means is common practice in northern Nigeria, and the intense competition between religious organizations with the interference of political organizations has been a dominant cause of conflict and in some cases, insurgency. Boko Haram is in this light a militant radical

[234] Bawuro M. Barkindo, "Growing Islamism in Kano City Since 1970: Causes, From and Implications", in Louis Brenner (ed.), *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: Hurst & Company,1993).
[235] R. Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria", (2012):137-155; Anonymous, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 42:2 (2012):118-144.
[236] A. Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Daʿwa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Shaykh Jaʿfar Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007)", (2012):1-23.
[237] A. Brigaglia, "Boko Haram: Jaʿfar Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust", (2012):35-44.
[238] David McCormack. "An African Vortex: Islamism in Sub-Saharan Africa", *The Center for Security Policy Occasional Papers Series*, 4(2005):1-17; A. Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Daʿwa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Shaykh Jaʿfar Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007)", *Islamic Africa*, 3:1(2012):1-23.
[239] A. Brigaglia, "Boko Haram: Jaʿfar Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust", (2012):35-44; A. Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Daʿwa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Shaykh Jaʿfar Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007)", *Islamic Africa*, 3:1(2012):1-23.

offshoot of Gumi's Islamic purification initiative. The sheer amount of people organized in the religious organizations makes it inherently lucrative for politicians to cooperate with religious leaders, but the decentralized nature of Islam in northern Nigeria means that cooperating with one excludes cooperating with the other, which increases the competition. Sharia became a topic of conflict because it increases the legal jurisdiction of religious Islamic leaders, but when the implementation is disregarded after electoral victory it causes conflict between politicians and the religious leaders. This was one of the more immediate concerns for Boko Haram.

One of the reasons of this relationship between religious and political organizations is the history of northern Nigeria and the dynamics of Nigerian politics, but another factor is the mobilization capacity of Mosques. Mosque communities in northern Nigeria are already organized communities and as the case with the hisba` group, they also have a group of organized young men willing to apply violence. Their leaders will often have political ambition, or at least a political alternative based on Islam, and access to political leaders due to the amount of people organized in their Mosque. Many Islamic groups will often be well-funded and form part of some international network. While there is nothing inherently violent about these communities they do provide the infrastructure for violent mobilization. Leaders, both religious and political, have taken advantage of this.

The mobilization capacity of a Mosque community is also due to the possibility of constant interpretation and reinterpretation of Islamic text. Islam is a *living religion* in this sense. Political and religious entrepreneurs can facilitate this dynamic to compete on the religious marketplace by offering an innovative religious stance and interpretations, and by establishing a new Mosque. In the logic of Salafism this is often done by claiming that other organizations are conducting bid'a or taghut, essentially claiming that they are un-Islamic.[240]

Boko Haram's interpretation of Salafism is constantly at odds with important factors in a Nigerian's everyday life: democracy, technology, education, Christianity, other denominations of Islam etc. Their logic is therefore inherently confrontational. This does not mean there is a linear development between Salafism and armed rebellion. But conflicts, either violent or non-violent, are inevitable. Salafism in Nigeria was appealing to middle class professional with modern educations precisely because it breaks down the traditional hierarchy in and outside the mosques. Yusuf came from an *almajiri*, madrassa often for orphans, background but rose to prominence within the Salafi organizations.[241] His story exemplifies the break with the establishment.

[240] P. M. Lubeck, "Nigeria: Mapping a Shari'a Restorationist Movement", (2011):244-279.
[241] J. Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations From Yobe State", (2014):33-62.

The debate on religion as a cause of insurgency in Africa is underdeveloped and was therefore excluded from the second chapter. Religion can be one of the causes of insurgency, by its interaction with politics. Politics is massively corrupt and violent, so when religion is activated for secular, political, ends it also turns violent. A more novel angle approach to Islam as a cause of insurgency is to look at its structural features: organized community with political ambitions leaders, who are connected internationally and nationally with political leaders. The interesting question is when can these communities be mobilized for violence? Sharia implementation in Nigeria is clearly an issue which enables violence. This is compounded in an already heavily contested political scene where the application of violent means is commonplace.

4-Conclusion

Since Boko Haram initiated an insurgency in northern Nigeria it has attracted ample analytical attention. A significant amount of the spotlight has focused on the causes of the insurgency. The most common explanation found in the literature is the socio-economic conditions of Boko Haram's environment. Another set of explanations explore the religious aspects of Boko Haram. These often identify the group as the latest leaf on Nigeria's tree of Islamic militancy, the roots of which date back to dan Fodio's jihad against the Habe rulers of Hausaland in the early 19th century. One branch of the religious explanations point out the intersectionality between politics and religion in northern Nigeria, another points to Boko Haram's role in the *Global Jihad* movement. Another dominant explanation looks at the instability across the Sahel belt and understands Boko Haram as forming part of this trend of regional instability.

Each of the explanations have strengths and weakness, but surprisingly none of the studies compare Boko Haram's insurgency to other insurgencies in Nigeria (MASSOB, MEND, or OPC) or to other insurgencies on the continent, present: MUJWA, AQIM, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (al-Shabaab), Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) etc., or past: Revolutionary United Front (RUF), National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), National Resistance Army (NRA), Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) etc. This thesis addressed this gap in the literature by asking the popular question: *What are the main causes of the Boko Haram insurgency?* It answers it by relating the debates in the academic literature on causes of insurgency in independent Africa to Boko Haram.

The four main debates identified in the literature are greed, grievance, ethnicity, and the state, each of which were used accordingly to explore the causes of Boko Haram's insurgency and in return identify gaps in the debates. Religion was initially pointed out as an underdeveloped debate, demanding further attention. Religion as a cause of Boko Haram's insurgency was explored to this end.

The greed debate argues that conflicts in Africa are more likely to occur where resources are plentiful, in other words resource rich environments. Boko Haram is characterized by the opposite as the insurgency is

conducted in an environment marked by decades of environmental and economic degradation, and is currently a resource scarce environment. It is therefore highly unconvincing that Boko Haram's insurgency was caused by the greed for natural resources.

The second debate is grievance as a cause of insurgency. The common argument within this debate is that the perception of relative group-based grievance is conducive to insurgency. If the group's political elite is also excluded from power, the risk of insurgency is further increased due to the elite's incentive to gain access to power by violent means. Data on perception is difficult to come by so most studies rely on observable data and assume that such data translates into perception. The North East, where Boko Haram initiated the insurgency, is political and socio-economically deprived in comparison to the five other geopolitical zones of Nigeria. But the sheer amount of insurgencies confuses findings on the dependent variable: insurgency and it is unconvincing that the region's relative grievance is a main cause of the insurgency. The lack of job opportunities in the region due to the loss of industries following the SAPs and the oil boom, the lack of educational opportunities, and the increased pressure on the urban job market due to the degradation of Lake Chad, and the expansion of Sahara is a more convincing argument as to why the life of an insurgent is attractive to some young men. In this regard poor socio-economic opportunities should be understood as a main cause of the insurgency by allowing for cheap recruitment. This repeats the conclusion made by Fearon and Laitin, who included cases from across the globe in their study.[242]

Ethnicity is the third debate identified in the academic literature. Boko Haram has generally not organized along ethnic lines, but has instead focus on their ideological identity: Salafism. This lack of ethnic mobilization resonates well with the literature, because the ethnic group from where most Boko Haram members originate is the Kanuri, who are a national minority. The group is also a minority group in a regional perspective. It is therefore not numerically viable to mobilize an insurgency based on the platform provided by the Kanuri ethnic identity, if a group has ambitions beyond the immediate few states in the North East. It would simply exclude too many potential recruits from non-Kanuri ethnic groups. Neither does the Kanuri identity grant access to the competition for state resources.

The last debate identified in the literature is the state as a cause of insurgency. Two general assumptions on the state as a cause of insurgency are made here. That weakness of specific institutions and that specific political behaviour can cause insurgency. Both can be consequences of democratization, which is the overriding theme of Nigeria's recent history. Godfatherism developed due to democratization and the weakness of the security sectors was deepened due to democratization. Godfatherism meant that the hisba groups were mobilized for political ends and the weak security sectors allowed for them to grow and develop into insurgencies. Both of these follow the general assumption. Effects of democratization on societies where

[242] J. Fearon & D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", (2003):88.

religious groups are already integrated into the political system is however often left out of the general literature.

The last category from which the thesis explored the causes of Boko Haram's insurgency is religion. The historical competition between religious organizations has been intense and often violent. Islam was more recently included in the political debate as a means to stop the endemic corruption, but once Sharia was politically activated, it combined with the religious competition, decentralized nature of Islam, and Nigerian politics, turned certain groups violent. This is not exclusive to the immediate period around the Sharia debate, but has been a reoccurring theme in Nigeria's history. It however exemplifies how religious principles can be activated in politics, and by this be a source of conflict.

Further studies on religion as a cause of conflict in Africa could therefore focus on the consequences of facilitating religious means to secular ends. Another aspect of religion that has been significant in Boko Haram's insurgency is the organizational capacity of the communities affiliated with mosques. The organizational structure of a mosque provides an infrastructure that is favourable for insurgency, and can be used by religious and political entrepreneurs to this end.

Political and religious entrepreneurs can use Islam to enter the religious marketplace because Islam is a living religion: it is open for interpretation and re-interpretation. This is a dynamic worth exploring further in relation to insurgency, especially within the logic of Salafism. One aspect of this could be to examine when Salafism have been activated in order to apply violence.

The primary cause of Boko Haram's insurgency lies in the dynamics of Nigerian politics, and Boko Haram comes across relatively generic in this sense.

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